

# Christian Science Center Complex

## Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report



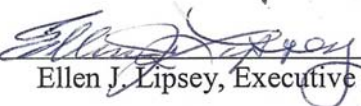
As amended January 25, 2011

*Petition #223.07*

Boston Landmarks Commission  
Environment Department  
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of  
**The Christian Science Center Complex**

as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by:  6/22/2010  
Ellen J. Lipsey, Executive Director Date

Approved by:  6/22/2010  
Susan D. Pranger, Chairman Date

As amended January 25, 2011

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## **1.0 LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

### **1.1 Addresses**

The Christian Science Center complex (now referred to by the Church as the Christian Science Plaza) is associated with multiple addresses, as follows:

- The Mother Church (original building and extension): 250 Massachusetts Avenue; listed by the City of Boston Assessing Department as 93 Falmouth Street.
- Christian Science Publishing House: 200-210 Massachusetts Avenue; listed by the City of Boston Assessing Department as 204 Massachusetts Avenue.
- Sunday School Building: 235 Huntington Avenue.
- Church Colonnade Building: 101 Belvidere Street.
- Administration Building: 177 Huntington Avenue.

#### **Assessor's parcel numbers**

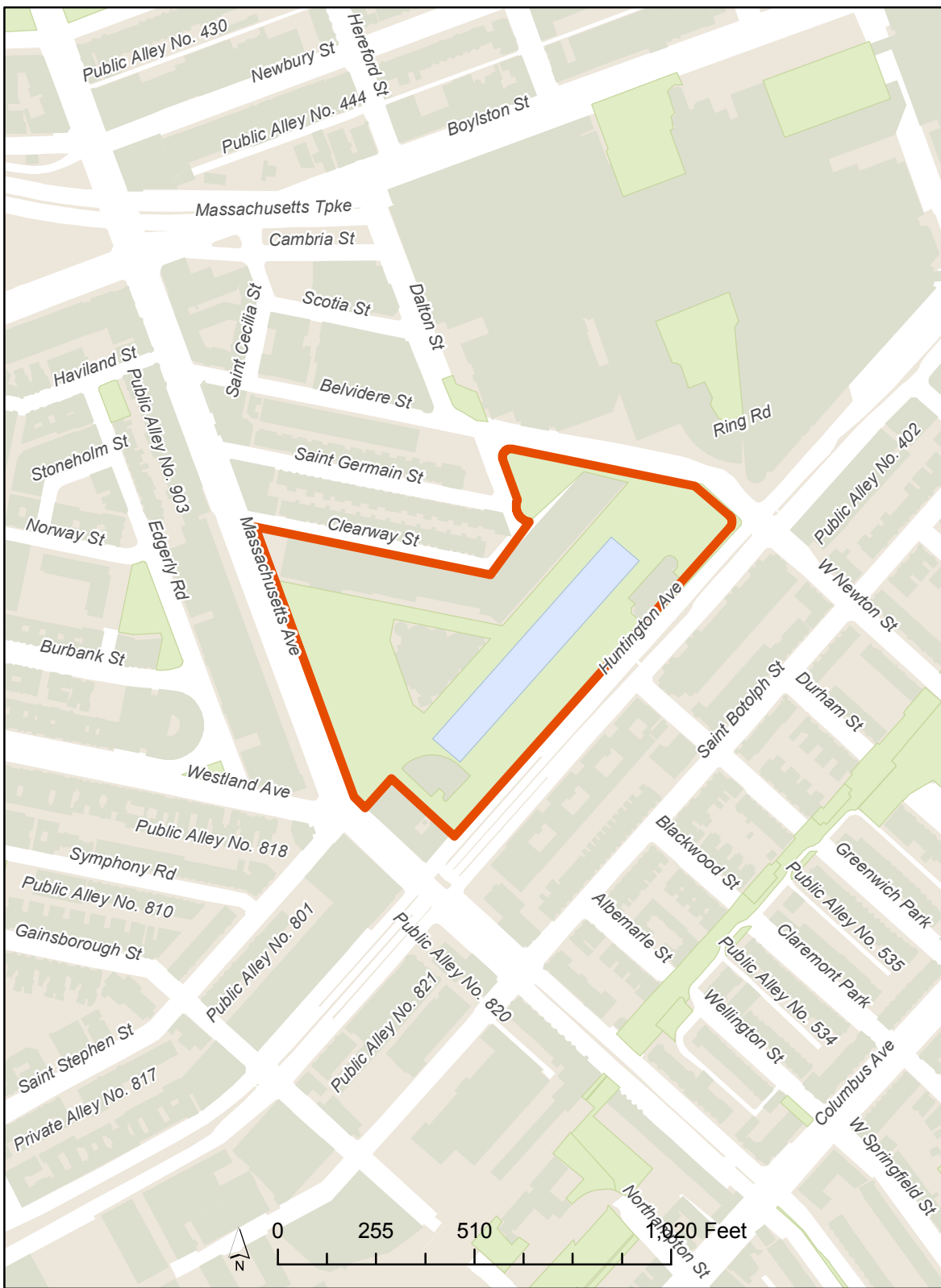
The City of Boston Assessing Department has assigned the following parcel numbers to the Christian Science Center complex:

- Parcel 0401162000 (containing The Mother Church Building).
- Parcel 0401164000 (contains the plaza west of The Mother Church Building).
- Parcel 0401185000 (contains the Publishing House Building).
- Parcel 0401150000 (contains the plaza and Reflecting Pool, the Administration Building, the Church Colonnade Building, and the Sunday School Building).
- Parcel 0401180000 (contains grass-covered lawn west of The Mother Church, rectangular sections west and east of The Mother Church, and a portion of The Mother Church Building).

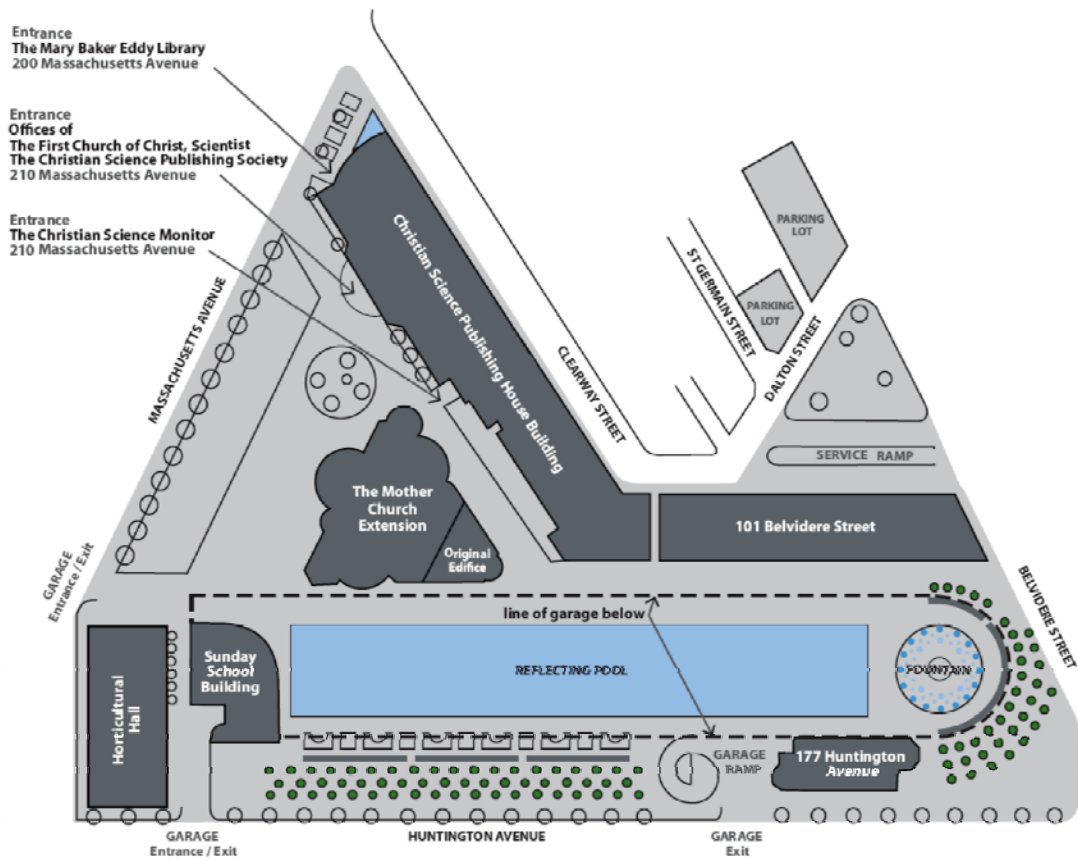
### **1.2 Area in which property is located**

The Christian Science Center is located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Huntington Avenue, in the Fenway section of Boston. Roughly M-shaped, the site contains approximately 14.5 acres of land, including approximately 10.4 acres of open space. The site is bounded by Huntington Avenue, Horticultural Hall, Massachusetts Avenue, Clearway Street, Dalton Street, and Belvidere Street.

### 1.3 Map Showing Location, Site Plan, and Aerial View of Site



**Figure 1.** Locus Map. (Boston Landmarks Commission)



**Figure 2.** Site Plan. (Image courtesy of The First Church of Christ, Scientist)



**Figure 3.** Aerial view of the Christian Science Center site and context, looking east. (Photograph © SKYSHOTS)

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Type and Use**

The Christian Science Center is comprised of six buildings and interstitial plaza areas, constructed between 1894 and 1975. The complex evolved to accommodate religious worship, office space, library and educational uses, and publishing operations. All operations remain in the complex today, although the printing presses and bindery operations associated with publishing are no longer on site.

### **2.2 Physical Description**

#### **Site**

The Christian Science Center occupies a large, generally flat site at the intersection of Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues. Horticultural Hall occupies the corner parcel on the northeast side of this intersection, immediately adjacent to the site. Symphony Hall occupies the northwest corner of the intersection. A long, modernist apartment block lines Massachusetts Avenue opposite and to the west of the Christian Science Center; brick row houses and small apartment blocks occupy the area immediately to the north of the site. Modern high-rise development (including the Prudential Center) approaches the Christian Science Center from the east, and a variety of low- and high-rise residential buildings occupy the south side of Huntington Avenue.

The present complex consists of three buildings constructed individually in the late 19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a major, late 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion (the Christian Science Plaza) consisting of three buildings and a landscape design that unifies all six buildings on the property. (*See Figure 2, site plan*).

The three oldest buildings on the site, constructed of stone, are located in its northwestern section. The Original Mother Church edifice (1894) and The Mother Church Extension (1906) are located near the center of the complex. The modest Original Mother Church, once tightly confined by city streets, is presently surrounded by the Reflecting Pool to the south, the Publishing House Building to the north, and The Mother Church Extension to the west. The voluminous Mother Church Extension now faces west towards Massachusetts Avenue, across a modern plaza and lawn area. At the northwestern portion of the site, the Publishing House Building (1934) extends a full city block eastward from Massachusetts Avenue, bounded by Clearway Street on the north. A wide, paved passageway (formerly Norway Street) separates the Publishing House and the church buildings.

The modern components of the Christian Science Center are concentrated along Belvidere Street and Huntington Avenue, at the eastern and southern portions of the site. This ensemble contains three large buildings constructed of cast-in-place

concrete, large areas of open space, and an underground garage. To blend with the appearance of The Mother Church Extension, the concrete structures were tinted to match the color of The Mother Church's limestone and lightly sandblasted to expose the aggregates in the concrete. The three new buildings, of varied shapes, are asymmetrically set around a long Reflecting Pool at the heart of the complex. A carefully landscaped plaza, featuring a variety of paved and planted areas, connects the buildings and surrounding streets.

The fan-shaped Sunday School Building (1971) stands near the corner of Huntington and Massachusetts Avenues, and backs up to Horticultural Hall, from which it is separated by a short service alley. The Church Colonnade Building (1972) stretches along the northeastern edge of the property, extending east-west towards Belvidere Street. The Administration Building tower (1972) is also oriented east-west, and stands along Huntington Avenue near Belvidere Street.

### **Original Mother Church (1894)**

The Romanesque Revival-style Original Mother Church rises three stories, with multi-faceted elevations capped by a lively roofline and accented by a prominent tower. Symmetrically organized around the tower, the layout is composed of a rectangular, gable-roof west end; an irregularly-shaped center section with a hipped roof; and a square, five-story bell tower at the east end, which has an attached, two-story apse.

The building occupies a roughly triangular site that tapers from its widest dimension of 107 feet on the west to its apex at the east corner, formed by the intersection of the former Norway (north) and Falmouth (south) streets. The building was constructed to accommodate a large, double-height auditorium, a reading room, and a Sunday school; a directors' room and Mother's room were located in the apse bay of the tower.

The church building employed a fireproof construction system consisting of subfloors and roofs of terra cotta tiles set in iron frames, and iron-reinforced brick walls. The highly textured exterior is faced with bluish-gray, rock-faced New Hampshire granite, set in a random ashlar pattern. Pink granite, both rock-faced and finely dressed, serves as sills, lintels, arch stones, quoins, stringcourses, and simply-molded cornice trim.

Romanesque architectural features of the building's design include arches, arcading, intersecting vaulting, and fresco and mosaic work, as well as the picturesque tower and turrets. The stained glass windows all have narrow bronze casings. Roofs are covered with gray slate tiles; copper gutters and flashing add a contrasting verdigris color.

The Original Mother Church has two visible side elevations, facing generally north and south, which are joined at an acute angle at the tower. Each elevation is



composed of four major elements, comprised (west to east) of a cross-gabled section, a hipped-roof block, an entrance porch, and the tower.

The relatively tall, cross-gable sections are sited to the west end of each elevation, mimicking the transept façades of Romanesque churches with their steeply pitched gable roofs and large, stained glass rose windows. At the first-floor level of both the north and south façades, a granite-clad exterior staircase, topped by a shed roof, rises at the western end of the building, leading to a secondary entrance with a four-panel oak door on the second floor. The open stair wall is divided into four bays by narrow colonnades capped with incised capitals. Curved iron grilles fill the spaces between the colonnades, and an iron gate encloses the bottom of the stairway. Above each stair, the gable end contains a two-story blind arch, clad with pink granite, containing a row of six slender arched windows on the second floor, and a large rose window above. A small, narrow, round-arched window is centered in each gable peak. Carved pink granite finials top the north and south roof peaks, and granite ball finials adorn the corners at the base of the roof slopes.

The hipped roofed center sections of the north and south façades are three stories high and two bays wide, with regularly arranged, paired windows set in rectangular openings at the ground and second levels, and in square openings with semi-circular transoms at the third floor. Stained glass sash on the first floor have a geometric pattern, while those on the second and third stories illustrate religious scenes. A square grey-granite chimney rises from the interior through the hipped roof of both the north and south elevations.

The main entrances to the Original Mother Church are located under one-story, triangular porches with shed roofs, tucked between the central section and the tower at the east end of each elevation. These three-bay, arcaded porches feature thick, polished-granite Tuscan columns with squared acanthus-leaf capitals. Beyond each arcade is a pair of double-leaf, two-paneled oak doors. Bronze torch lamps are mounted on the wall adjacent to each entrance.

The tower at the eastern point of the church rises 120 feet from an unarticulated base, with an attached two-story apse to an open belfry at the fifth story. The apse, at the east wall of the tower, is capped by a conical, granite slab roof and displays stained glass windows on each level. Three small rectangular windows, glazed with leaded diamond panes, are set in its raised basement level, topped by tall rectangular window openings at the first floor. On the second floor, the two outer windows feature semi-circular transoms, and the central window is set in a round-arched opening. A wide pink granite belt course encircles the apse between the first and second floors, and contains a pink granite tablet with a testimonial inscription.

The north and south walls of the tower are identical, featuring two small rectangular windows on the second floor, a single round-headed window centered

on the third floor, and two taller rectangular windows on the fourth floor. The tower's east elevation, above the apse, has two narrow rectangular openings on the third story and two taller, narrow rectangular openings piercing the fourth floor. The west wall is blank up to this level.

A projecting, pink granite string course separates the tower shaft on all elevations from the open belfry on the fifth story. Slender clustered colonettes with foliage capitals frame the three-bay, round-arched openings of the belfry's arcades, which are spanned by an arcaded balustrade; all the trim is formed of pink granite. Slim, rounded turrets accentuate three corners of the belfry, each topped by a small conical roof. The southeast turret is larger in diameter, reflecting its function as a chimney for the fireplaces in the apse. The tower terminates in a corbelled stone cornice and a steeply pitched pyramidal hipped roof with a foliated copper finial.

The west wall of the Original Mother Church, which now adjoins The Mother Church Extension, was built with a central, five-sided projecting bay flanked by symmetrically arranged windows. The projecting bay was removed for construction of the Extension, and the stained glass windows that remain on this wall are lit by electric bulbs, encased in shallow niches behind the windows.

### **Mother Church Extension (1906)**

The Mother Church Extension is a cathedral-scale, Byzantine and Renaissance Revival-style church, contiguous at its east end with the much smaller Original Mother Church (1894). The Extension constituted the second and largest phase of the church's development. When viewed from the east, with the Original Mother Church in the foreground, the Extension forms a dramatic backdrop to the older and smaller building.

As with the Original Mother Church, the constraints imposed by existing street patterns, programmatic requirements, and zoning restrictions primarily dictated the form of the Extension building, which covered nearly the full extent of its original lot. Its overall outer footprint is roughly trapezoidal in shape and corresponds to the irregular historic site configuration formed by St. Paul (west), Falmouth (south), and Norway (north) streets. The building measures approximately 256 feet wide at its greatest extent along the west elevation, and 156 feet deep, west to east.<sup>1</sup>

The Mother Church Extension rises five stories at the center to a two-story ribbed dome that measures 82 feet in diameter and extends 224 feet above grade. The majority of the superstructure, including the main dome, has a steel frame skeleton; the perimeter exterior walls are self-supporting masonry. The main dome rests on a circular steel ring that transfers the roof load to four steel trusses

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Armstrong and Margaret Williamson, *Building of the Mother Church: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1980), 105.



encased in massive stone pendentive piers at the corners of the central block. The half-dome roofs on the north and south wings are constructed of layers of thin ceramic tile laid in the Guastavino vault form technique.<sup>2</sup>

The Mother Church Extension is built primarily of light-colored Indiana limestone. The first-floor level is faced with finely dressed New Hampshire granite of a uniform gray tone and fine grain that references in color the similar rock-faced stone of the Original Mother Church. Even surface textures and flush masonry joints create smooth wall surfaces enlivened by extensive decorative carved detailing, executed mainly in limestone and granite, with some white marble accents. The roofs of the main and half-domes are covered in light gray terra cotta tile.

Aside from the Eastern Byzantine aesthetic that inspired the domical roof and square plan of the building, the majority of the Extension's stylistic treatment is derived from the Classical Revival architecture of the Italian Renaissance. The multiple projecting components of the building all have a hierarchical, three-part arrangement of an architectural base, a single order of pilasters, and a complete entablature. The Ionic order predominates on the first floor and the Corinthian is featured on the upper levels. Roofs are invariably outlined by a perimeter balustrade or parapet. Overall, the ornament is diverse in form and not completely symmetrical.

Sculptural decoration consists of columns, pilasters and lintels, as well as dentils, modillions, and all manner of decorative moldings. Robust carved, often fruited, and swag classical ornament enriches the window and door frames and the entry and tower architraves. Circular elements punctuate intervening wall surfaces. Arched windows and open arcades are generally trimmed with engaged Ionic or composite columns or colonettes. Tennessee marble is used for delicately carved recessed bands, architraves, arcade capitals, and tympani over doorways. Strong horizontal lines drawn by the string courses, cornices, and parapets that encompass the building unite the myriad sculptural shapes and serve as a grounding counterpoint to the emphatically vertical central core.

The building's multiple entrances are asymmetrically placed on the north, west, and south elevations. Two original primary entrances, one each on the west and south elevations, are prominently featured in elaborately detailed openings, while others are handled more simply. Many are recessed within single or multi-arched loggias. Constructed of paneled and carved oak, the exterior doors are used in both single and double-leaf configurations.

The main sections of the Extension are lit by a combination of arched and rectangular windows. Unlike the figured stained glass of the Original Mother

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<sup>2</sup> Charles C. Coveney, "The Designing and Building of the Mother Church Extension, Boston, Massachusetts," (Unpublished reminiscence, 1934, on file, Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA), 45.

Church, most of the window openings in the Extension contain translucent glass panes with a textured surface decorated with minimal bands of free ornament and other architectural forms painted in colors. Some of the windows have structural and ornamental dividing members, particularly the large auditorium windows; occasionally opalescent glass was used. Byzantine-influenced designs appear in the glass in the dome and half-dome windows, and the rose windows in the east and west gables have a larger percentage of decorated glass.

The complex massing of the Extension is organized around a square, flat-roofed central auditorium block at its core, which remains mostly concealed by a variety of classically ornamented, applied volumes. Rectilinear tower shafts define each corner and culminate in an open, triple-arcaded element echoing the Original Mother Church tower. The flat-roofed towers are capped by a modillion cornice and paneled parapet that continues around the central block in alternating paneled and balustered sections.

The cylindrical base of the central dome is pierced with rectangular windows that are not visible from the street. Above this base is a band of 16 bays of paired arched openings with clustered center colonettes that form arcading around the dome's upper story. Round-arched windows are deeply recessed behind this arcade, and a cornice and balustrade similar to the main block and towers encircles the dome above the arcade. The ornately detailed belfry cupola atop the dome stands approximately 36 feet in height; it is articulated with arcading, a balustrade, a terra cotta onion-dome roof, and a pineapple finial.

The Mother Church Extension has three fully visible side elevations facing generally west, north, and south. The north and south elevations angle towards each other from west to east along the historic street lines, and are similar in massing and treatment, while the west elevation is unique. Only small portions of the east elevation are visible, above and flanking the Original Mother Church edifice.

The west elevation, facing Massachusetts Avenue, is the widest and principal façade of The Mother Church Extension. Only when viewed from this direction does the building appear to be a completely free-standing structure. The asymmetrical but balanced composition of elements was originally centered on a shallow, three-story pedimented pavilion with a large rose window, which remain today. Other features, such as the pattern of arched and rectangular windows, pilastered bays, and third-story cornice, were modified with the addition of the Portico in 1975, described below.

Flanking the entrance portico and central pavilion of the west elevation are secondary entrances, curved ambulatories that step progressively inward, and corner towers. To the north of the Portico, an ornately detailed, two-story barrel-vaulted entrance vestibule within a frame of pilasters and columns projects at the ground level. A curved second story wall runs above, surmounted by an arcaded

third story ambulatory. These elements intersect a three-story octagonal tower at the northwestern corner of the building, which features a small pedimented entrance in the northwest bay, engaged Corinthian columns at each facet joint, ornate foliated swags above the arcaded third floor windows, a stepped cornice, and a rooftop balustrade. Rectangular first and second floor windows, an arcaded third floor, Corinthian pilasters, and a dentil and modillion cornice visually unify this portion of the building.

To the south of the Portico, the west elevation consists of a ground-level, colonnaded arcade with a recessed entrance, a curved second floor ambulatory with round arch windows, and a third floor arcaded ambulatory. These elements connect to a three-story square tower that marks the southwest corner of the building, rising to a prominent cornice and rooftop balustrade.

Ground level apsidal projections on the east and west sides of the tower vary in height and roof shape (flat and domed) and provide space for interior staircases. Near each of its corners, the tower's east and west walls display three-quarter columns resting on the first-floor plinth. A primary building entrance is set in the south façade of this tower, consisting of a highly decorative and monumental round-arched surround, framed by double-height columns under a second-story belt course. The entranceway is surmounted by an arched window with two sets of pilasters and a cascading foliated swag on the upper floor.

The north and south elevations of the Extension exhibit similar but not identical treatments, comprised of a three-story corner tower on the west (described above); a dominant, semicircular wing in the center; and a rectangular east corner. The symmetrical, three-story semicircular wing reaches between the corner tower elements of the main block on the north and south façades, rising to a two-story high dome that is pierced by round-hooded dormers with circular windows. These hemicycles are articulated on the second and third floors by flat, two-story pilasters with Corinthian capitals, delineating bays of single round-arch windows that are framed by slender columns and topped by a swag and a square window. A generous entablature on these wings culminates in a projecting dentil and modillion cornice and a paneled and balustraded parapet repeated from the central block.

The south-facing Plaza façade of the Extension displays visual prominence in both the current and historical site configurations. The southwest corner tower is described above. A one-story arcaded loggia extends the remaining length of this façade at ground level, beneath the second and third story hemicycle wing. The vaulted loggia ceilings are constructed of overlapping, unglazed light blue tiles laid in a zigzag Guastavino pattern. Bronze light fixtures hang from the center of the vaults. A second floor window in the hemicycle extension contains a marble dedication tablet for The Mother Church Extension, ornamented with decorative bas relief. At the southeast corner of the building, above the loggia, the building is articulated by a corner pilaster, rectangular and arcaded windows, decorative

swags, and a continuation of the central block's cornice and parapet. A tall, round arch dormer with a rectangular window, engaged columns, and cornice heightens the appearance of this corner element.

The north elevation of The Mother Church Extension, facing the former Norway Street corridor and the Publishing House building, is similar to the south elevation, with two major differences. Instead of a first floor loggia, this elevation's ground level features a simple rhythm of punched window openings with ornate, cascading swag decoration. The tower at the western corner of this elevation is octagonal instead of square, and is described with the west façade, above.

On the east (rear) side of the building, most of the Extension is integrated with the west wall of the Original Mother Church. One-bay wide sections of the center block's corner towers are exposed, however, at the north and south ends of this wall, beyond the volume of the Original Mother Church. These bays have shallow curved walls with rectangular and round-arch windows, elaborate foliated swag decoration, and a tall round-arch dormer above the parapet. A large pediment, similar to the one on the west elevation, rises above the Original Mother Church roofline. Drip molding detail in the rakes of this pediment departs from the overarching classical styling of the Extension, and defers to the Romanesque style of the adjoining Original Mother Church.

### **Portico (1975)**

A monumental, Neoclassical-style entrance portico, semicircular in shape, was attached to the pedimented pavilion on the west elevation of The Mother Church Extension in 1975. In 1973, the original Publishing House building was demolished, opening up the area to the west of the Extension for a grand public entrance facing Massachusetts Avenue. The limestone Portico wraps around the original pavilion, doubling its depth. The building is now approached by a semicircular set of shallow stone steps that lead from the plaza to a double-height entrance vestibule, with a curtain wall of butt-glazed glass and horizontal bronze bands, and three symmetrically-placed revolving doors. Ten 42-foot-tall limestone columns with Corinthian capitals surround the vestibule and support a stone entablature with the inscription "THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST" under a flat roof with a stone balustrade.

### **Christian Science Publishing House (1934)**

The block-long Publishing House building anchors the northwest corner of the Christian Science Center, extending eastward from Massachusetts Avenue along the south side of Clearway Street. The building's rectangular footprint measures approximately 570 feet long by 130 feet wide, with its long axis parallel to Clearway Street and its façade oriented south toward the Plaza.

The main mass of the Neoclassical-style building rises three stories to a flat roof, with an additional two stories hidden behind a parapet. A rectangular tower element with a hipped roof rises an additional five stories above the western section of the building. This is the only one of the six buildings in the Christian Science Center that contains a landscaped border, along both its west and south elevations. Built to house the administrative and manufacturing activities of the Christian Science Publishing Society, the structure contained executive and business offices and public spaces, including a lavish reception area in its western half, and the publishing functions in the east section. The Mary Baker Eddy Library is now located in the west part of the building, and the printing presses and bindery operations associated with the publishing functions have been moved off-site.

The Publishing House is constructed of limestone selected to match The Mother Church Extension in color and texture, and was obtained from a quarry in Indiana that was near the source of the Extension's limestone. Block-jointed masonry rustication creates continuous horizontal lines at the street level. Minimalist ornament is concentrated around the entrances, which are hierarchically articulated through the use of differing levels of detail. Double-height window bays of varying widths are flanked by plain or fluted pilasters, and introduce rhythmic vertical elements that articulate the second and third story on all elevations. A wide molded entablature with an ornamented frieze and dentilled cornice encircles the roofline beneath a parapet on both the horizontal building mass and the tower element.

Fenestration throughout the building consists of rectangular, double-hung sash. The use of 8 over 8 sash configuration predominates, with 12 over 12 sash on the second floor. Windows are placed in punched openings on the first floor and in the stepped back roof levels of the main block and tower. The shallowly recessed vertical bays on all the elevations feature ornamented bronze spandrels between the elongated second-floor and shorter third-floor windows of the main block, and between the three equally proportioned levels of the tower. Second-story windows in the corner end bays are set in molded surrounds with projecting stepped lintels. The window sash are all made of bronze. Doors throughout the building are also bronze, and bronze lanterns are set into the walls adjacent to the main and secondary entries.

The south, Plaza-facing façade is divided into a 19-bay western section and a 20-bay eastern section, connected by a three-bay hyphen. The western section of this elevation is dominated by a slightly projecting seven-bay central pavilion, which contains the main entrance—a trio of grade-level doorways with modillioned lintels sheltering double-leaf bronze doors. A double-story, Tuscan octastyle porch surmounts the entrances and features an open balustrade, coffered ceiling, and tall architrave on which is inscribed “The Christian Science/Publishing Society/Founded by Mary Baker Eddy.”

This pavilion is surmounted by an 11 bay long by 5 bay deep tower, which is setback from the façade, centered on the pavilion, and surmounted by a hipped roof. The tower is detailed with three-story fluted Ionic pilasters with carved capitals, carved window borders, and ornate bronze panels. The tower's bronze frieze is inscribed with a set of paired words at each corner: "Love/Purity," "Health/Hope," "Mercy/Peace," and "Faith/Justice." A delicate leaf-like design encircles the tower roof, which is sheathed in ochre-colored glazed tile.

The hyphen linking the east and west ends of the building is flush with the east section and has a secondary grade-level entrance recessed in its central bay. This modest doorway features a rectangular pedimented surround and a single-leaf door.

The eastern portion of the building's south elevation was originally composed of a central, 10-bay section recessed between symmetrical five-bay wings. Construction of the Church Colonnade Building to the east truncated the eastern end. The frieze along the central section of this part of the building is inscribed with the psalm, "The Lord Gave The Word Great Was The Company That Published It."

The west elevation, facing Massachusetts Avenue, presents a symmetrical, seven-bay treatment on the upper two levels, detailed similarly to the north and south elevations. The frieze above the arcaded bays reads "To Proclaim The Universal Activity And/Availability of Truth." A one-story, 1000 square foot vestibule with a curved glass curtain wall projects from the first floor. This asymmetrical, wedge-shaped addition, constructed in 2002, features a flat, stainless-steel trimmed roof and glass doors.

The north elevation of the Publishing House building, facing Clearway Street, is a continuous plane divided into 46 bays. Three large, vehicle-loading openings with rollup doors are located along this wall, as well as two recessed secondary entrances. At the east end, the plane of the Publishing House wall intersects the blank concrete rear wall of the Church Colonnade Building at an oblique angle.

### **Sunday School Building (1971)**

Set at the southwest corner of the site, the quarter-circle shape of this structure visually connects Huntington and Massachusetts avenues within the Christian Science Center. Rising 59 feet over three stories, the building measures approximately 97 feet by 148 feet along its straight sides; the curved façade has a radius of approximately 70 feet. The Sunday School Building contains a foyer and meeting rooms on the ground floor, and an auditorium on the second and third floors. In addition to educational programs, the auditorium was designed to accommodate 1,100 people as a conference center.

The curved façade features deep concrete piers at ground level, fronting large plate glass, butt-glazed bays. A projecting horizontal band rings the top of this level, surmounted by a second-story grid of piers and lintels with flush, butt-glazed windows below and recessed transom openings above. The massive upper section of the building splays out from narrow concrete ribs, surmounted by a tall concrete band that is asymmetrically divided by a narrow, horizontal strip of glazing recessed along its full length.

Two slab walls contain the straight sides of the Sunday School Building, facing Horticultural Hall and Huntington Avenue. The west elevation, facing Horticultural Hall, is separated from the curved façade by a narrow, glazed vertical slit on its front edge; its broad surface is broken into large sculptural shapes that provide visual interest and accentuate a below-grade entrance to the underground parking garage. This largely blank wall features two double-leaf service doors on the ground level; a band of plate-glass windows, also at ground level, inside a cutaway corner at the recessed entrance to the garage; and a curved concrete corner rising the full height of the building on the south side of the garage entrance. (The parking garage extends below the Sunday School Building and Reflecting Pool, and connects to the Sunday School Building, Administration and Church Colonnade buildings, and The Mother Church Extension.)

The Huntington Avenue elevation of the Sunday School Building is blank, articulated only by a narrow, glazed vertical slit with one curved jamb at its left side and a double-height arched opening at its right side. The arch leads to a wide, vaulted passageway lit by a row of clear glass globes set high on the inside wall surface. The east end of this slab wall, facing the plaza, is solid concrete, continuous with the top vertical band of the curved façade.

### **Administration Building (1972)**

Measuring approximately 183 feet long by 86 feet wide, the Administration Building is a 26-story office building, with an additional story below ground. The structure rises 355 feet from a rectangular footprint, and was built to house the Church's 15 general departments, with information, reception, and lounge areas on the ground floor, and the directors' offices and board room on the top two floors. It stands at the east corner of the Christian Science Center, at the intersection of Huntington Avenue and Belvidere Street.

The long sides of the Administration Building feature deep concrete grids framing nearly-square openings with plate glass infill on the upper levels. The bases of these long façades are double-height, which is fully expressed on the Plaza façade with two-story, free-standing concrete piers, which are attached to a concrete spandrel band in the plate glass enclosure wall beyond. A secondary entrance to the building is set at the western end of this façade, bordering the plaza. Recessed in the end bay between an orthogonal and a splayed pier, its location is marked by a discrete section of heavy concrete spandrel above, with metal and glass doors (a

combination of revolving and single leaf) facing the side, and a concave concrete wall leading from the plaza to the doors.

The Huntington Avenue elevation is grounded by a low, projecting concrete base that wraps around the Belvidere Street corner of the building. The ground floor on this elevation consists of a low concrete wall surmounted by slightly elongated window openings framed by short piers. A narrow stairway behind a portion of the projecting concrete base accesses the basement from Huntington Avenue.

The short ends of the Administration Building are shaped with solid polygonal towers—six-sided on the Belvidere Street end, and three-sided on the Massachusetts Avenue end. The primary building entrance faces Belvidere Street. It is contained within a massive, recessed, two-story arch that features splayed side walls, a concrete spandrel across the spring line, and a metal and glass storefront vestibule. At the corner of this entrance wall and the six-sided tower, a narrow, glazed vertical slit rises the height of the building on the tower's side wall.

The west elevation of the Administration Building, facing towards Massachusetts Avenue, features a three-sided bay and a vertical column of punched glass openings in the middle of the otherwise solid elevation. Donlyn Lyndon observed that these “blank, faceted bays . . . are recollective in giant scale of the familiar Back Bay protrusions.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Church Colonnade Building (1972)**

Located at the northern corner of the Christian Science Center, the Colonnade Building forms a horizontal counterpoint to the Administration Building, which it faces across the Reflecting Pool. The east end of the building borders Belvidere Street, while the back elevation faces Dalton, St. Germain, and Clearway streets.

Measuring approximately 365 feet long by 57 feet wide, this five-story structure rises 66 feet above ground, and has one story below ground. It originally housed the maintenance department, a Christian Science Reading Room, three floors of office space (envisioned for expansion of the Publishing House), a cafeteria and lounges for church employees, and a radio and television studio.

On its plaza façade, the base of the Colonnade Building is dominated by a series of obliquely angled, three-story high concrete piers, each of which is pierced by an arched opening at ground level. A concrete cube is mounted diagonally inside the spring line of each arch, with a large, clear glass, globe light fixture mounted on each face. The colonnade element terminates with a high concrete fascia and projecting horizontal shelf, which in turn are surmounted by a top story of faceted glass bays and a heavy, U-shaped roof element that forms a cornice.

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<sup>3</sup> Donlyn Lyndon, *The City Observed: Boston* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 201-202.



The deeply recessed building enclosure wall beyond the colonnade is mostly blank on its western end, with a discrete group of seven punched openings on the ground floor. A one-story, rectangular tunnel at this end of the building connects the plaza with the service road at the back of the Colonnade Building. A building entrance at the plaza end of this passageway features a cutaway corner with a semi-circular tower element. A revolving door is set in the ground floor of this cylindrical form, flanked by a single leaf, glass and metal door on each of the orthogonal walls of the re-entrant corner.

The east end of the plaza façade's enclosure wall is dominated by a thick, three-story high concrete grid with deeply recessed rectangular openings. Within each of the grid openings, half of the void is glazed with plate glass; half is a thin, vertical strip of concrete. A modest entrance is located at the Belvidere Street end of this façade, with double-leaf, glass and metal doors set in a one-story bay of butt-glazed glass that is flush with the surrounding concrete panels. A modest entrance is set in a thick, free-standing wall slab at the Belvidere Street, facing the colonnade. It features a single-leaf door framed by narrow sidelights. A large concrete drum cantilevers above this entrance.

Facing Belvidere Street, the free-standing wall slab is pierced by a four story high, half-arch, which is bridged by a concrete walkway at the second story. The larger section of this street elevation is blank, with the exception of a bank of butt-glazed, plate glass storefront windows at the ground floor, which is virtually flush with the surrounding concrete.

The long back elevation of the Colonnade Building consists of a three-story high concrete grid, similar to that of the Administration Building. It is surmounted by a tall, solid concrete band that is bisected horizontally by a narrow strip of continuous glazing. The western end of the building is connected to the Publishing House, with a blank concrete end wall turning the corner between the Colonnade and the oblique angle of the Publishing House façade.

### **Open Space**

The Christian Science Center contains three major open spaces:

- The Plaza landscape, located around and between the main buildings, including the Huntington Avenue plaza, the Massachusetts Avenue lawn and plaza, and a passageway between The Mother Church and the Publishing House. Primary design elements are the Reflecting Pool and Children's Fountain, an entrance to the underground garage, circulation areas, planting beds, and benches.
- The Mary Baker Eddy Library Courtyard, set between the Publishing House and Massachusetts Avenue.

- The “Triangle” park, contained by the Colonnade Building, Belvidere Street, and Dalton Street.

### *The Plaza Landscape*

The plaza landscape consists of the interstitial areas between and around the buildings on the site, covering approximately ten acres of open space, including both hardscape and planted areas. Most of the ground area is paved with dark-burned brick pavers, edged with black granite and precast concrete bands, which also articulate major circulation paths. Slightly recessed concrete drainage channels are periodically punctuated by rectangular, bronze grates.

The plaza area parallel to Huntington Avenue is dominated by a Reflecting Pool that measures approximately 690 feet long by 100 feet wide by 26 inches deep, bordered by an infinity edge of curved, polished Minnesota red granite. The infinity edge allows water to continually spill over all sides of the Pool, rendering visible a continuous plane of water. The Reflecting Pool is filled 6-7 months each year, from roughly mid to late April to early to mid November. The Pool is drained of water during the remaining months of the year.

The Reflecting Pool was designed to be functional as well as aesthetic. Although the initial intent was that the Reflecting Pool also serve as the cooling system for the complex, it seems that this function was never implemented with any success. Based on early memos, correspondence, and discussions with facilities staff, it appears that some cooling system use was tried for a portion of one early season and then discontinued as impractical. When the cooling towers were installed at the fifth floor of the Publishing House Building in the early 1970s, the Reflecting Pool water connections for HVAC cooling were eliminated.

A water feature known as the Children’s Fountain occupies the area between the east end of the Reflecting Pool and Belvidere Street. Originally designed as a circular fountain 80 feet in diameter, with 144 jets forming a dome of water, this element was re-designed in 2001 by Copley Wolff Design Group to remove projecting elements at grade. The present fountain consists of concentric bands of red brick and black granite paving with flush water jets that spray as high as 40 feet in the air. It is bordered by a semicircular concrete bench and asymmetrical, concentric rows of deciduous trees at the Belvidere Street side.

Immediately adjacent to the Huntington Avenue side of the Reflecting Pool is a row of heavy concrete planting beds, containing perennials and shrubs, in a pattern of alternating square and rectangular shapes. The tops of the planter walls are at seat height. Centered in each semi-circular indentation on the rectangular beds, facing the Reflecting Pool, is a four-pole light fixture with multiple arms holding glass globe lamps. These light fixtures rise from a circular concrete pad edged with a band of black granite, flush with the brick pavement. To the south

of the planting beds is a line of blocky, rectilinear concrete benches, in three long segments.

Between the planting beds and Huntington Avenue stand three rows of regularly-spaced linden trees. The ground surface of this bosque is articulated with perforated concrete tree grates and bands of dark burned brick edged with black granite. A spiral ramp emerges from the underground garage between the bosque of trees and the Administration building. At the plaza level, it is enclosed with low, thick concrete walls surmounted by a narrow metal band railing; a planting bed is set in the semi-circular center.

The plaza area between The Mother Church Extension and Massachusetts Avenue features a slightly raised, trapezoidal lawn area along the street edge, framed by concrete curbing. Regularly-spaced red oak trees line the sidewalk edge. Four-pole light fixtures with multiple arms holding clear glass globe lamps are spaced along the plaza edge, set on slightly raised, circular concrete pads. A large circular planting bed is set flush with the pavement near the north corner of The Mother Church Extension. It contains turf and an asymmetrical grouping of five honey locust trees.

A rectangular lawn border extends across nearly the entire façade of the Publishing House building, ornamented with shrubs and trees. The linden trees here were re-planted from the earlier Church park along Huntington Avenue

### ***Mary Baker Eddy Library Courtyard***

The entrance vestibule attached to the west end of the Christian Science Publishing House building opens onto a small grade-level courtyard, completed in 2002, which replaced an original enclosed below-grade courtyard. A portion of the original full-story limestone courtyard wall with balustered insets remains along Clearway Street. On the Massachusetts Avenue side, two detached end sections of the original wall and the central round-arched gateway stand with low granite walls between them. The cut edges of the wall sections are covered with pink granite panels. The massive granite-trimmed surround of the gate is capped with a semicircular pediment. Within the partially enclosed courtyard, a water wall attached to the Clearway Street wall empties into a semicircular pond in front of the glass-walled vestibule. Several bench seats are arranged among small trees and shrubs planted along brick pathways between the street and the pond.

### ***“Triangle” Park***

The Triangle Park is bounded by Belvidere and Dalton streets and a service road belonging to the Church, which is adjacent to the back of the Colonnade Building. The larger triangle of land that existed here before construction of the Colonnade Building was lined with rows of four-story brick rowhouses, and contained a back alley in the general vicinity of the present service road. Today’s park is a flat site,

maintained in turf, with a scattering of mature, deciduous trees. Its design appears to be coincident with the Christian Science Plaza project.

## 2.3 Images



**Figure 4.** The Original Mother Church. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 5.** The Mother Church Extension and Portico: Massachusetts Avenue Plaza façade. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 6.** The Publishing House building: Plaza façade. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 7.** Back (Clearway Street) and side (Massachusetts Avenue) elevations of the Publishing House building. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)





**Figure 8.** The Mother Church, passageway, and Publishing House. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 9.** The Original Mother Church, Publishing House, and Colonnade Building. (Photograph © The First Church of Christ, Scientist)



**Figure 10.** Church Colonnade Building: Plaza façade. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 11.** Church Colonnade Building: Back elevation. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)





**Figure 12.** Administration Building: Plaza façade. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 13.** Administration Building: Main entrance facing Belvidere Street. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 14.** Sunday School Building: Plaza façade. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 15.** Sunday School Building: Service alley elevation. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 16.** Benches and planting beds in Huntington Avenue plaza. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 17.** Huntington Avenue bosque, garage ramp, Mother Church buildings. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)





**Figure 18.** Reflecting Pool and bosque, looking toward Huntington Avenue. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 19.** Children's Fountain. (Photograph © The First Church of Christ, Scientist)



**Figure 20.** East end of plaza, looking towards Belvidere Street: Children's Fountain, bench, and trees. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 21.** Massachusetts Avenue lawn, plaza, Publishing House, and Mother Church Extension Portico. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)





**Figure 22.** Mary Baker Eddy Library Courtyard. (Photograph by Wendy Frontiero)



**Figure 23.** View of Christian Science Center, looking west; 1972. (Photograph by Gordon N. Converse / © 1972 The Christian Science Monitor ([www.CSMonitor.com](http://www.CSMonitor.com)). Used with permission.)



**Figure 24.** View of Christian Science Center, looking east; 1975. (Photograph by Gordon N. Converse / © 1975 The Christian Science Monitor ([www.CSMonitor.com](http://www.CSMonitor.com)). Used with permission.)



### **3.0 SIGNIFICANCE**

The Christian Science Center is historically and architecturally significant at the local, state, regional, and national levels as the headquarters of a worldwide religion; as an extraordinary example of the evolution of a religious complex; for its association with Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of The First Church of Christ, Scientist; and for its association with several distinguished architects and landscape architects over the span of nearly a century, including Charles Brigham, Solon S. Beman, I.M. Pei, Araldo Cossutta, Hideo Sasaki, and Stuart Dawson.

The construction of the Original Mother Church and its Extension established the site as the center of the Christian Science movement, while the addition of the Publishing House marked the rapid expansion of the religion into other arenas and began to create a more comprehensive urban landscape. The three earlier buildings are the nucleus of an urban plaza influenced by the City Beautiful movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and served as models for Christian Science architecture throughout the country.

The complex also achieves significance as a rare example of a monumental, modernist architectural design for an entire city block, and as a prominent open space for the Fenway, Back Bay, and South End neighborhoods.

#### **3.1 Historic Significance**

##### ***Background and History of the Christian Science Center Site***

The site now occupied by the Christian Science Center was originally part of the Gravelly Point peninsula, which projected between the Muddy River to its west and the fens of the Charles River to its north and east. The Gravelly Point Peninsula was part of the Town of Roxbury until its annexation by Boston in 1868. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two dams were built and mills were established here, and a swath of railroad lines from the west extended through the Charles River Basin to downtown Boston. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, filling of the Basin and development of the upscale Back Bay residential neighborhood, to the north of the Christian Science Center site, commenced. The area to the southeast of the site was concurrently filled and developed as the new South End neighborhood.

The marshes in the Charles River Basin created a major drainage and sanitation problem for the growing city, however. In 1878, a newly-created Park Commission hired landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to study proposals for the area. Olmsted designed a system employing tidal gates and a sewage interceptor in a civil engineering project that was integrated with a new,

naturalistic public park known as the Back Bay Fens – “a jewel” in the large-scale, coordinated park system that Olmsted created for Boston.<sup>4</sup>

Construction of the Fens parkland in the 1880s and 1890s encouraged important new development in the surrounding area, aided by increasing population growth and unfortunate catastrophe. After the Great Fire of 1872 in downtown Boston, many institutions, along with a large number of residents, began moving westward to Copley Square, the Fenway, Kenmore Square, and beyond.

The Fenway area became home to a heterogeneous mix of rowhouses, apartment buildings, hotels, churches, schools, libraries, and museums in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Prominent among the institutional occupants here were The First Church of Christ, Scientist, which built its original edifice on the present site in 1894, substantially enlarged it in 1906, and established its Publishing House here between 1908-17; and, at the corner of Massachusetts and Huntington avenues, Symphony Hall (1899-1900) and Horticultural Hall (1901).

Construction of the Massachusetts Avenue bridge across the Charles River in 1891 was instrumental in promoting cross-town traffic, resulting in a wave of new development along Massachusetts Avenue (originally known as West Chester Park) and Huntington Avenue. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Massachusetts Avenue was changing to a main commercial thoroughfare, with stores and offices situated on the ground floors of residential buildings or replacing them completely with new commercial buildings.

In 1895, the Original Mother Church occupied a small parcel at the apex of a triangle formed by three streets: Massachusetts Avenue, Falmouth Street (which ran from Massachusetts Avenue to Belvidere Street, and is now a passageway between The Mother Church/Colonnade buildings and the Reflecting Pool), and Norway Street, which extended between Massachusetts Avenue and Falmouth Street, and is now a passageway between The Mother Church and the Publishing House Building. A shallow, U-shaped street, known as St. Paul Street, bisected this triangle, in the area that is now a paved plaza in front of The Mother Church Portico. (*See Figure 30, 1895 map.*)

At this time, the area consisted mainly of three- to five-story, red brick rowhouses. The block between Norway and Dundee (now Clearway) streets was still undeveloped, although it was fully built up with rowhouses (and two adjoining apartment buildings along Massachusetts Avenue) by 1908.

Most of the rectangular block between Huntington and Massachusetts avenues and Falmouth and Norway streets was also undeveloped in 1895, except for a group of rowhouses at the corner of Huntington Avenue and the end of Norway

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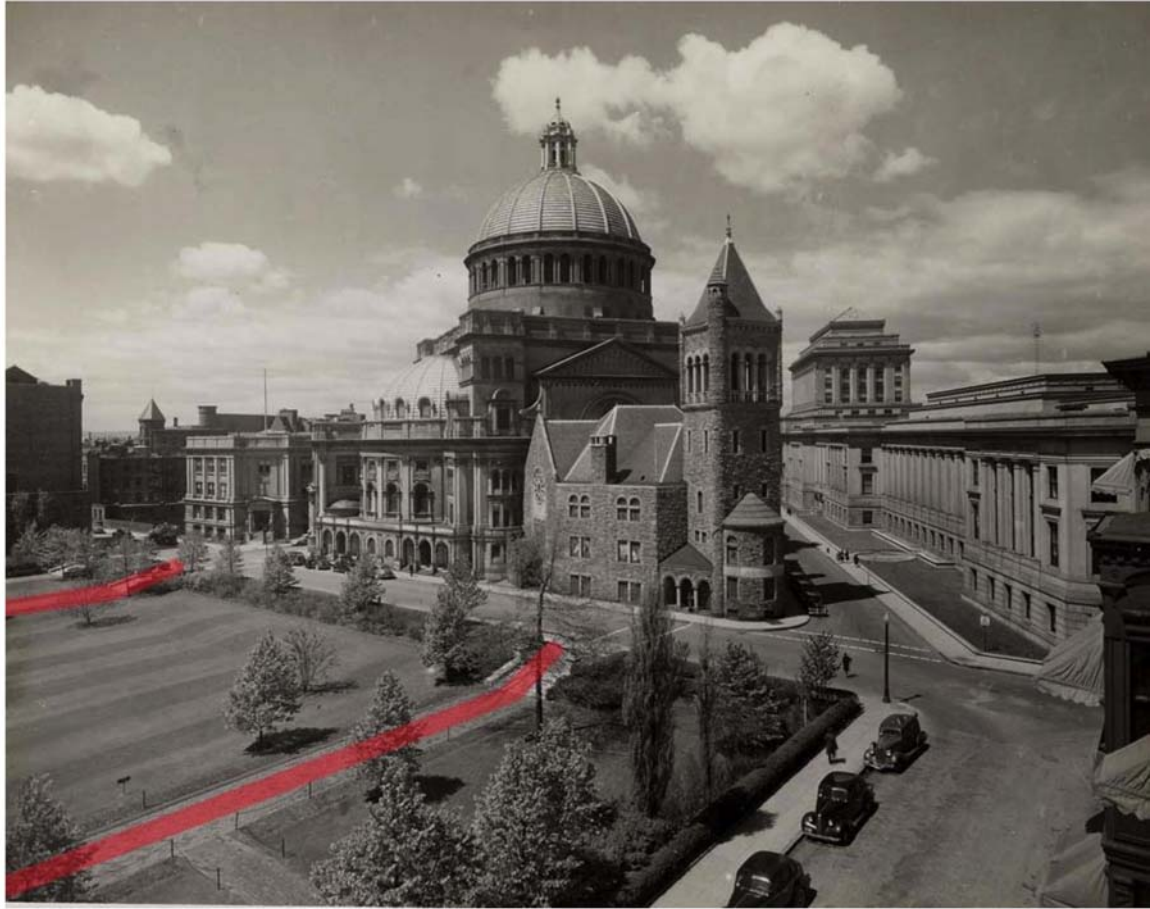
<sup>4</sup> 1983 *Survey & Planning Grant Part I – Fenway Project Completion Report*, Submitted August 31, 1984 to Massachusetts Historical Commission (on file, Boston Landmarks Commission and Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA), 3.

Street. By 1908, Horticultural Hall and Chickering Hall (later known as St. James Theatre and the Uptown Theatre; now the site of the Sunday School Building) occupied the Massachusetts Avenue end of this block, and a park owned by the Church was developed on the remaining open space of the block. (*See Figure 31, 1908 map.*)

By 1917, the first Christian Science Publishing House building occupied the entire parcel across St. Paul Street from The Mother Church, behind a line of rowhouses facing Massachusetts Avenue. (*See Figure 32, 1917 map.*) Between 1928 and 1938, the rowhouses at Norway Street and Huntington Avenue were demolished, and the adjacent church park was extended to Norway Street. (*See figure 38, 1938 map.*) The rowhouses along Massachusetts Avenue were demolished in the 1960s and the first Publishing Society Building was demolished in 1973 to make way for the Christian Science Plaza expansion project. (*See Figure 25.*)



**Figure 25.** View of Christian Science Center, looking west; 1968. (Photograph by Gordon N. Converse / © 1968 The Christian Science Monitor ([www.CSMonitor.com](http://www.CSMonitor.com)). Used with permission.)



**Figure 26.** Historic view (c.1930s) of The Mother Church Extension, Original Mother Church, and Church Park. (Photograph courtesy of The Mary Baker Eddy Library and The Mary Baker Eddy Collection)





**Figure 27.** Historic view (mid-20<sup>th</sup> century) of The Mother Church Extension, Original Mother Church, and Church Park. (Photograph courtesy of Robert A. Herlinger)

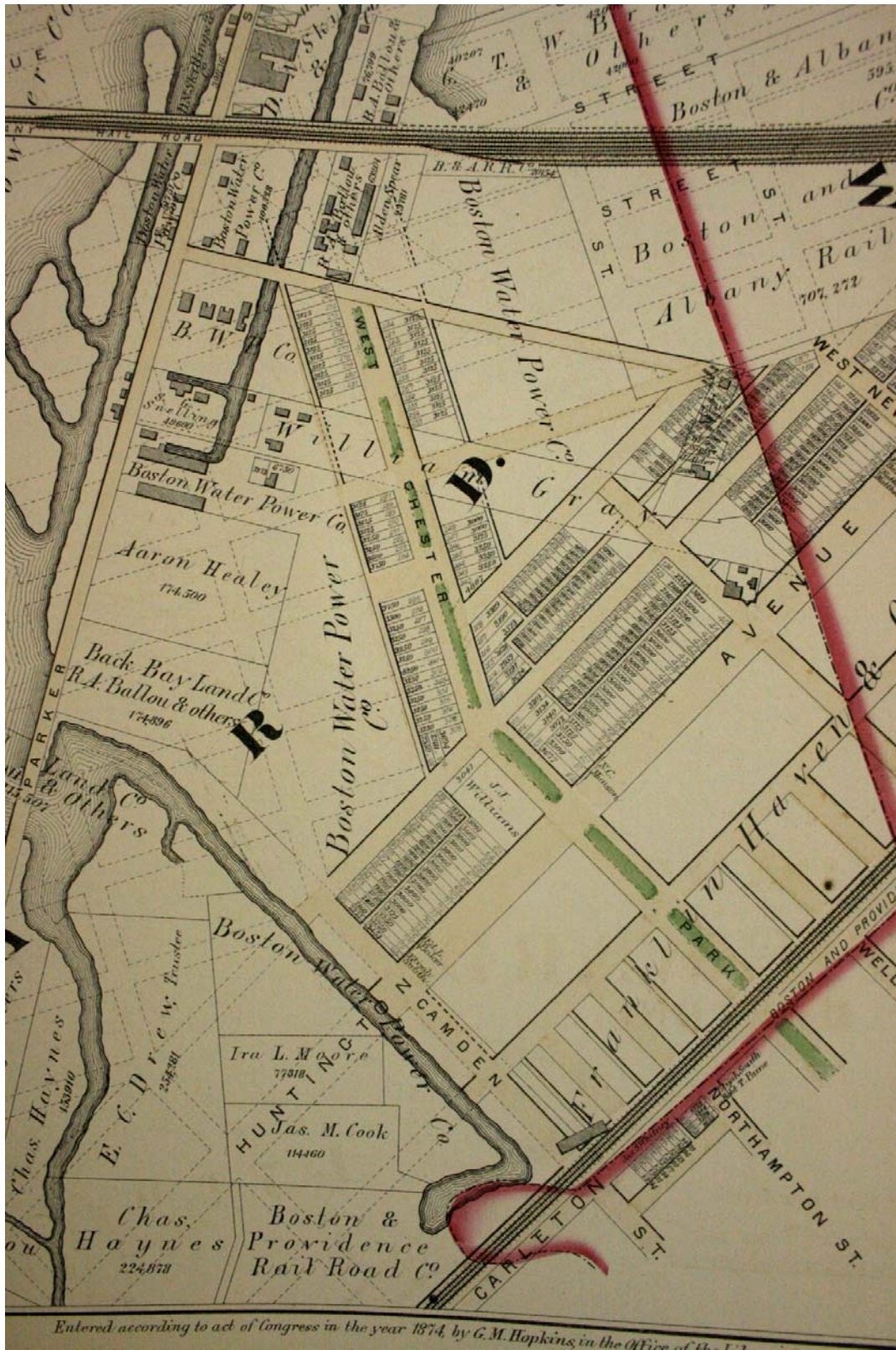
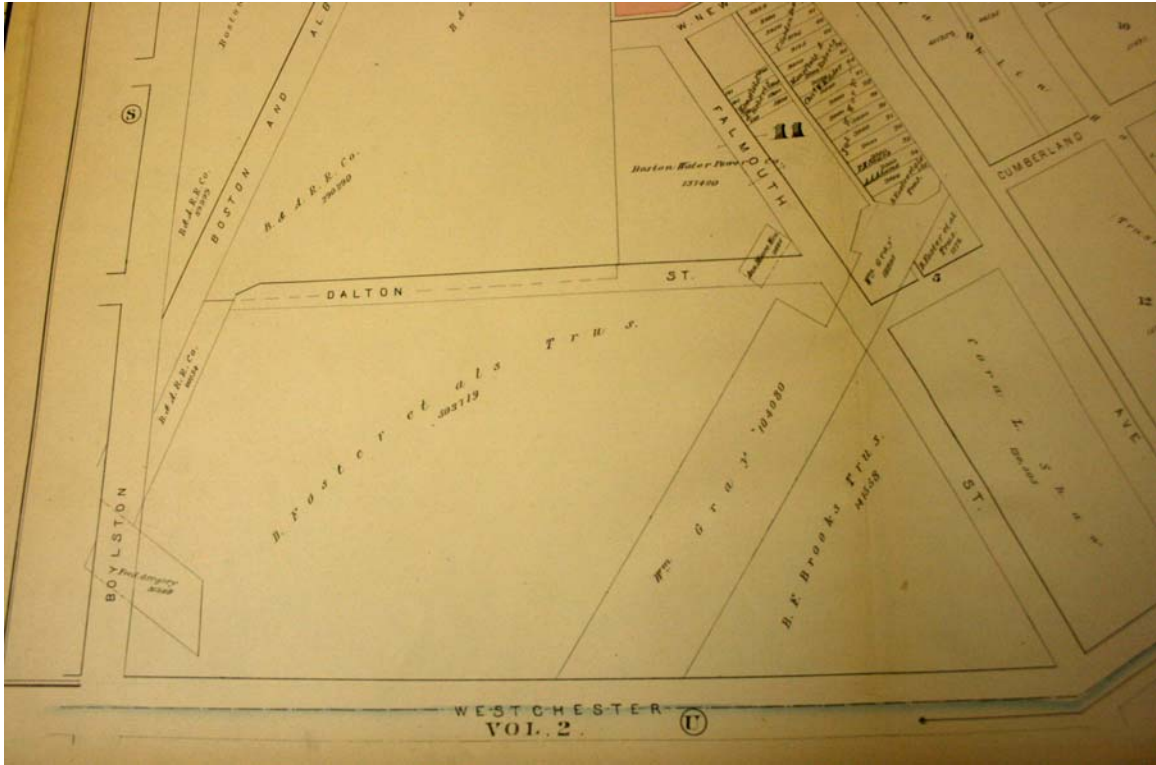


Figure 28. 1874 Hopkins map. (West Chester Park is now Massachusetts Avenue.)





**Figure 29.** 1883 Bromley map. (West Chester Park is now Massachusetts Avenue.)





Figure 30. 1895 Bromley map.



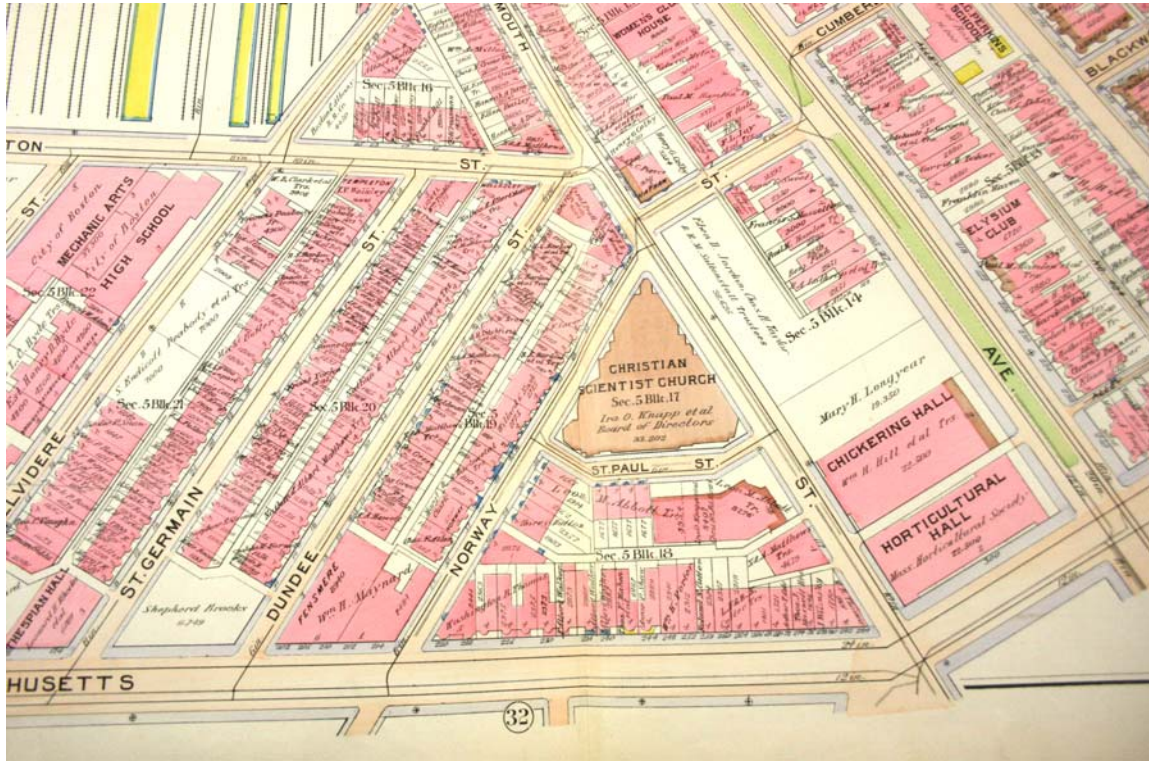
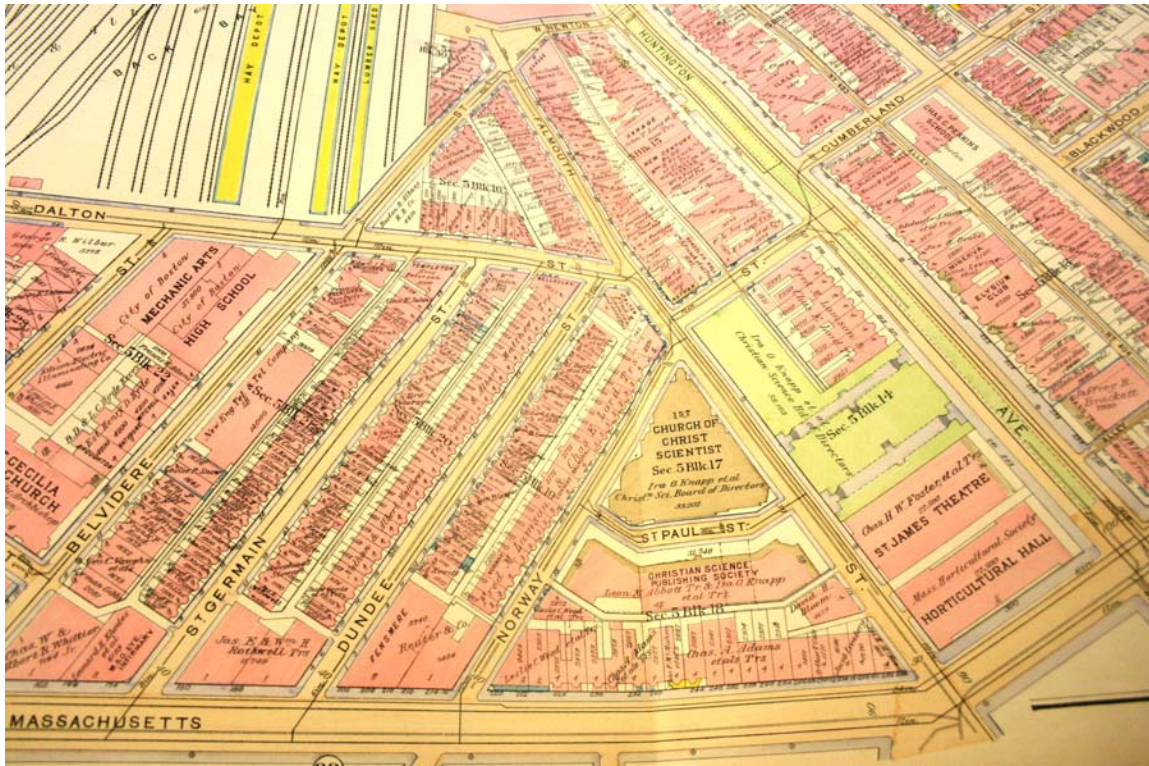


Figure 31. 1908 Bromley map.



**Figure 32.** 1917 Bromley map.



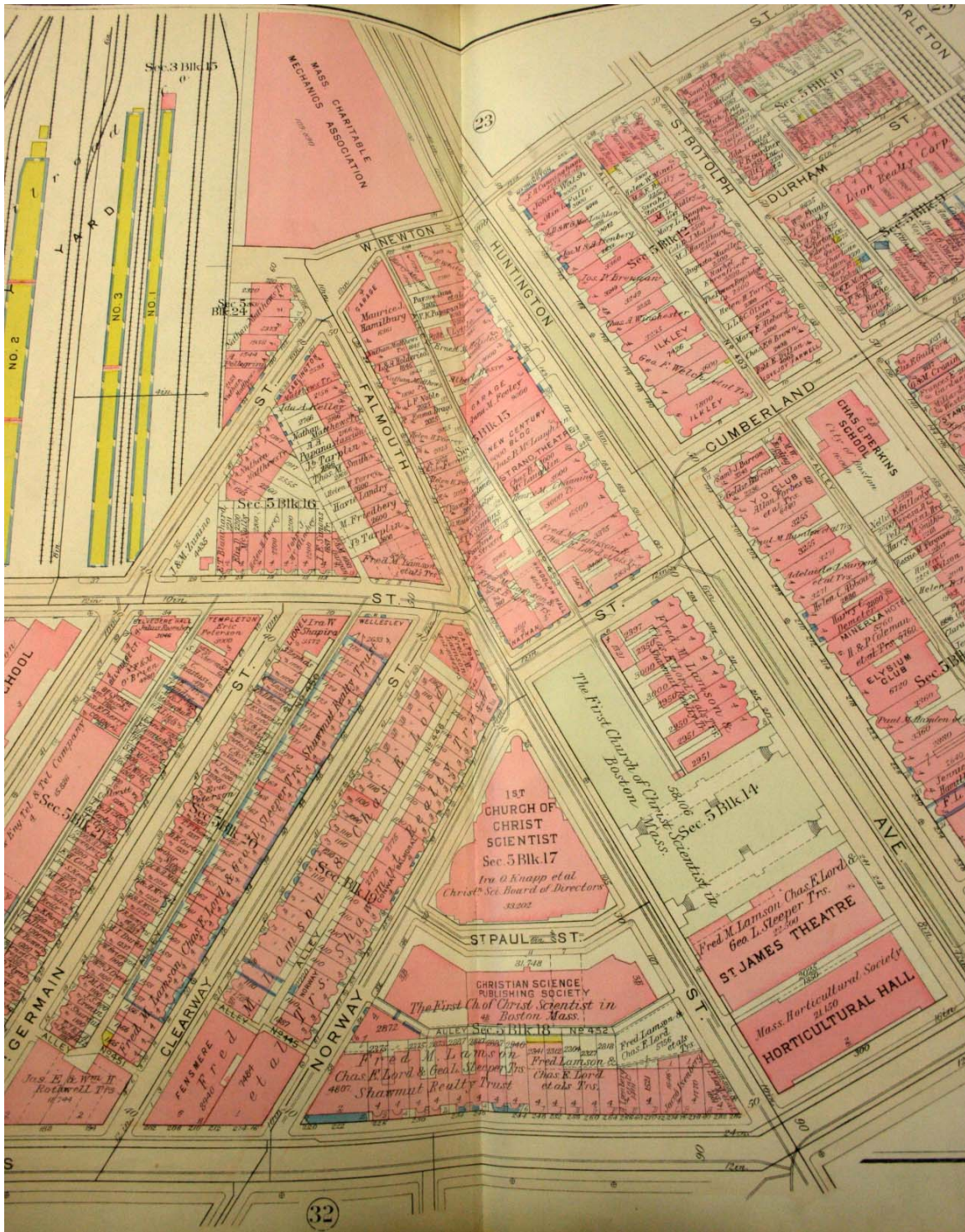


Figure 33. 1928 Bromley map.





### *History of The First Church of Christ, Scientist*

The First Church of Christ, Scientist was founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910). Based on Mrs. Eddy's teachings on spirituality and healing, Christian Science grew rapidly during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. From a dozen members in her first church, the church comprised more than 8,700 members in 1890, 55,000 members in 1906, and more than 268,000 members in the United States in 1936. Today, the church is estimated to have between 150,000 and 400,000 members in 60 countries, distributed among approximately 1,700 branch churches and societies.

Both Mary Baker Eddy and the reformist movement she led were nearly instant celebrities. In 1875, Mrs. Eddy published the seminal book of the faith, *Science and Health* (later known as *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*); her first church was formally organized in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1879. Mrs. Eddy established the Massachusetts Metaphysical College in 1881 and the National Christian Scientist Association in 1886. These were dissolved in 1889, in order to concentrate on the re-organization and development of The Mother Church, with its headquarters in Boston, in the 1890s. A reading room for studying Mrs. Eddy's writings and other publications opened in Boston in 1888; its progeny have since become one of the distinctive features of the religion.

To help spread her philosophy, Mrs. Eddy founded a number of periodicals in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the *Journal of Christian Science* (later known as *The Christian Science Journal*), the *Christian Science Weekly* (later the *Christian Science Sentinel*), and the *Christian Science Quarterly*. One of the best-known legacies of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, is *The Christian Science Monitor*, an international daily newspaper that was founded by Mrs. Eddy in 1908 to counter the sensationalist reporting of the period, including papers like Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* that were consistently critical of Mrs. Eddy and the Christian Science Church. From its inception, the *Monitor* was committed to "significant news" and dedicated to a "crusading reformative approach to human affairs."<sup>5</sup>

Active in fields that were traditionally dominated by men – religion, medicine, and publishing – Mrs. Eddy was one of the most prominent, and controversial, women in her time. Newspapers and magazines followed her lectures and activities and sought her opinions. Mark Twain devoted an entire book to a satirical commentary on the Christian Science movement. In 1995, Mary Baker Eddy was inducted (posthumously) into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Established during a period of cultural and social upheaval, Christian Science was "a radical and distinct alternative to prevailing contemporary directions of religious thought" and aligned with many socially and politically progressive

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<sup>5</sup> 1984c Building Information Form: Christian Science Publishing Society (on file, Boston Landmarks Commission and Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA).

issues of the day, including gender equality and the rejection of materialism.<sup>6</sup> Its philosophy was pragmatic, personal, and experiential, and avoided traditional doctrine and ritual. Christian Science eliminated the standard religious hierarchy, promoted a spiritual system based on what it considered to be scientific processes and rational reasoning, and attracted large numbers of middle-class, urban worshippers, especially women. One Christian Science teacher at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century declared that “Christian Science stands in every community for pure government, social purity, honest popular elections, business integrity, [and] the purification of literature and journalism.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Gottschalk, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 294.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Eli Ivey, *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States 1894-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 8.



## 3.2 Architectural History and Significance

The Christian Science Center complex is a renowned work of architecture and landscape design, comprising individually distinctive elements that together form a rich, cohesive whole that transformed and elevated its urban setting. As an ensemble it is a work of vision and brilliance, important to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century development of the city of Boston, the New England region, and the nation. Designed by prominent architects of the late 19<sup>th</sup> through late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the buildings and landscape represent fine and often exceptional examples of period architectural design and craftsmanship.

### *The Mother Church and Christian Science Publishing House Buildings*

In 1889, Mary Baker Eddy gave the Church a small plot of land in Boston (less than 1/5 of an acre), where the Boston board of The First Church of Christ, Scientist was authorized to construct a church for “not less than fifty thousand dollars.”<sup>8</sup> The board selected building plans submitted by Franklin I. Welch of Malden, Massachusetts, an untrained architect for whom the Original Mother Church was his first commission. Frederick Comstock of Hartford, Connecticut, served as associate architect and was responsible for the interior designs. Phipps and Slocum of Boston produced the elaborate stained glass windows. Construction of the Original Mother Church, which cost \$250,000 and was designed to accommodate 1000 people, began on November 8, 1893. The first service was held in the building on December 30, 1894.

The Original Mother Church is a local expression of the Romanesque Revival style commonly used for churches and other public buildings during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also a prime example of the type of fireproof construction encouraged in most major American cities near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Boston instituted new fireproofing laws in 1892, just before construction on the church began, and the heavy masonry typically used in Romanesque Revival buildings satisfied these requirements well. In addition, the architects designed the terra cotta sub-floors and roof of the church specifically to meet Boston’s fireproofing standards. When the church was dedicated in January of 1895, the *Boston Globe* reported, “The building is as near fireproof as it can be made and is one of the first churches in this country to be so built.”<sup>9</sup>

The first edifice constructed for The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston is a visible statement of the city’s role in the founding of the Church and of the importance that Mary Baker Eddy attached to the movement’s “home” base. It

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Armstrong, *The Mother Church: A History of the Building of the Original Edifice of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1897), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret M. Pinkham, *A Miracle in Stone: The History of the Building of the Original Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, 1894* (Santa Barbara, CA: Nebbadoon Press, 2009), 204.

Ivey, *Prayers in Stone*, 2.

remains the nucleus of the expansive complex that developed around it, and serves as a reminder of the Church's late 19<sup>th</sup> century roots. The "first substantial urban church of the new Christian Science movement" was "viewed as a significant milestone by Christian Scientists everywhere and by the world at large" and became the "public face for the new American-based church."<sup>10</sup>

The construction of The Mother Church in Boston sparked a nationwide Christian Science building boom that lasted into the early 1930s. By 1898, over 32 churches had been built across the United States. In addition, many aspects of The Mother Church's construction program and sequence became standard practice for The First Church of Christ, Scientist including construction financing practices and local control of building projects.

As early as 1896, the Boston congregation had outgrown the Original Mother Church building, necessitating two worship sessions each Sunday. Mrs. Eddy directed the board to organize additional churches in Cambridge, Chelsea, and Roxbury, but the Boston church remained overcrowded. In August of 1901, plans to purchase the abutting properties for the expansion of the church were approved. By April 1903, the Church had acquired the triangular parcel between Falmouth, Norway, and St. Paul streets, measuring approximately three-quarters of an acre. Demolition of the original church building was considered early on in the planning process, but Mrs. Eddy amended the *Church Manual* bylaw in May 1903 to prevent its demolition.

Although the Church's expansion plans were primarily motivated by the need for additional worship space, they also responded to several other large urban Christian Science churches that had been constructed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Architecturally, the Christian Science Church had adopted a predominantly Classical Revival style in its religious buildings, which were notable for their size and visual prominence. The Classical Revival style, popularized by Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and used for numerous public buildings in the decades following the fair, suited the progressive ideals of the new religion. The Christian Science Church had no established historical traditions of church architecture, and consciously chose to associate itself with the ideals of classicism and the City Beautiful movement. Classical Revival churches differed from more traditional ecclesiastical models such as the Gothic or Romanesque styles or the Colonial meetinghouse form. As an integral part of the nascent Christian Scientist identity, Classical Revival style churches represented a return to an earlier and "purer" form of Christianity, as well as a forward-thinking approach to society linked to contemporary movements concerned with social and political reform, city beautification, and the renewal of urban life.

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<sup>10</sup> Pinkham, *A Miracle in Stone*, 182.

The most distinguished of the early Christian Science churches, outside of Boston, included Solon S. Beman's First Church of Chicago (1897) and the First and Second Churches of New York City. Frederick Comstock, the associate architect associated with Boston's Original Mother Church, designed the Second Church of New York City, completed in 1901 and described as a "great white marble edifice."<sup>11</sup> The First Church of New York City hired the prominent New York firm of Carrere and Hastings to design a similarly ambitious building that was completed in 1903.

Lavish descriptions of these new church buildings regularly appeared in Christian Science publications until Mrs. Eddy prohibited them in 1903, perhaps to quell architectural competitiveness amongst church branches. However, the presence of impressive churches in Chicago and New York presumably inspired the Boston Church's Board of Directors, who, at their 1902 annual meeting, stated:

"As we have the best church in the world, and as we have the best expression of the religion of Jesus Christ, let us have the best material symbol of both of these, and in the best city in the world."<sup>12</sup>

The Board was successful in their appeal: a motion approving the construction of a new \$2 million auditorium for The Mother Church was approved at the meeting.

The Board of Directors first hired E. Noyes Whitcomb of Boston, the builder of the English Gothic Revival-style First Church in Mrs. Eddy's hometown of Concord, New Hampshire (1904), to work on the extension plans. Whitcomb recommended the Boston architect Charles Brigham because of the distinctive Unitarian church he had designed in Fairhaven, Massachusetts (1901-1902), as well as his experience with public buildings such as the Museum of Fine Arts in Copley Square (1876-1878, demolished 1906). Brigham and his chief assistant Charles C. Coveney were the initial principal designers for The Mother Church Extension.

Whitcomb died suddenly in 1905, and the Board invited Solon Beman, the architect of numerous Christian Science churches in Chicago, to replace him. When Brigham became sick and went to Bermuda to recover, Beman came to Boston to act as the principal architect for the project and significantly influenced the final designs for the new church. The engineers for The Mother Church Extension project were J. R. Worcester & Co. of Boston.

Upon its completion, the massive Mother Church Extension "manifested its existence with such abundant architectural vehemence" that it provoked substantial critical response.<sup>13</sup> Many people viewed the ambitious size and style

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<sup>11</sup> Ivey, *Prayers in Stone*, 63.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

of the building as a statement of the Church's presence in the city, which was interpreted in both negative and positive lights. The 20<sup>th</sup> annual exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club, held in 1907, called The Mother Church Extension "important" but also deemed it "an enormous, domed monstrosity." A *Boston Globe* article on the dedication of the Extension described the view of the church from Huntington Avenue as "in many respects the least satisfactory. There the façade seems to be an irregular succession of angles and curves, and of almost confused use of stone and design."<sup>14</sup> Other critics saw the Extension as a universal form of public architecture, inspired by City Beautiful ideals and suitable for churches, clubhouses, and city halls. Frederick Coburn suggested that it represented a "new modern church architecture."<sup>15</sup>

However mixed the reviews of its appearance, The Mother Church Extension solidified the decidedly Classical Revival architectural manifestation of Christian Science. By 1930, over 2000 branch churches of The Mother Church had been built around the country. Like the Extension, the churches are typically square-plan buildings with pedimented porches, often crowned by a low dome centered over the auditorium. Ionic columns, frequently of marble or terra cotta, and classically inspired details such as arcading and pilasters were favored in many church designs.

Within Boston, The Mother Church remains the largest and most architecturally significant Christian Science church edifice. The Second Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, located in Roxbury, is a much smaller domed granite building with a cruciform plan and minimal ornament, designed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge in 1914. The Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, occupies a gabled wood-frame structure with a two-story bell tower in Hyde Park.

The Mother Church Extension represents the apex of the debate among Christian Science Church members over the appropriate architectural presence of the Church. It is a distinguished example of a Classical Revival basilica with a Byzantine plan and reflects the joint influence of Boston architect Charles Brigham and Chicago architect Solon Spencer Beman on the final design of the building. The Extension also illustrates the prevalence of the Classical Revival style in Christian Science architecture and, more generally, in public buildings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Portico attached to the west elevation of The Mother Church Extension in 1975 (see below) reaches out to the site and creates a singular and welcoming entrance to the Church. Its Neoclassical styling, with massive Corinthian columns and a symmetrical composition, complements the architecture of the 1906 building without attempting to overshadow it. The half-rotunda shape brings the multiple curved geometrical elements of the Extension down to the

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<sup>14</sup> "Majestic Cathedral of Christian Science in Boston," *Boston Globe*, April 1, 1906, SM11.

<sup>15</sup> Ivey, *Prayers in Stone*, 74.

ground level, and visually connects the building to the quarter-round Sunday School Building across the Plaza. The multiple interstices between the columns and the transparent glass wall of the Portico invite the public to view its interior spaces.

Shortly after the completion of The Mother Church Extension, the Church added a large park running along the southern elevation of The Mother Church with an approach from Huntington Avenue, creating a “beautiful sunken garden” and a “grander City Beautiful context” for the centerpiece building.<sup>16</sup> The first Christian Science Publishing House, built opposite The Mother Church c.1908 (demolished in 1973), was situated at the corner of St. Paul and Falmouth streets. Designed by Solon Beman in a Classical Revival style consistent with The Mother Church Extension, the first Publishing House was relatively small in scale and, by the early 1930s, had been subject to several additions and extensions.

When the first issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* appeared on November 25, 1908, the Publishing Society employed 78 people. By 1930, it had outgrown its offices opposite The Mother Church.<sup>17</sup> The Board of Directors appointed a Building Committee to supervise the construction of a new and larger publishing plant and administrative office building on property owned by the Church between Massachusetts Avenue, Clearway Street, and Dalton, Falmouth, and Norway streets.

The Committee selected local architect Chester Lindsay Churchill and Lockwood-Greene Engineers, Inc., who formed a temporary partnership for the project. Churchill was in charge of the overall design, while Lockwood-Greene was responsible for the publishing plant layout. Aberthaw and Company was the contractor.<sup>18</sup> Funds for the construction of the Publishing House Building came from Church members and friends and Christian Science branch churches all over the world. The former Christian Science Publishing Society building housed church administrative offices after the new building was completed in 1934.

Adjacent to The Mother Church, the existing Publishing House building represents the first major component of the multi-disciplinary urban complex envisioned by The Church’s Board of Directors and continues the Classical Revival aesthetic established by The Mother Church Extension. It was the Church’s first substantial architectural contribution to the urban landscape after the Original Mother Church and its Extension; it set the precedent for a coherent complex designed around the central religious buildings. It is a significant example of classical modernism in central Boston and the first major public building designed by Churchill.

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<sup>16</sup> Ivey, *Prayers in Stone*, 74.

<sup>17</sup> “Looking Backward.” *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 1932.

<sup>18</sup> Edward J. Preston, “History of the Christian Science Publishing Society,” Unpublished archival material, c.1935 (on file, Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA), 9-12.



Churchill described on his design concept for the monumental addition to the Christian Science complex thusly:

“There were two main points to consider in designing this building ... The [Mother] Church, together with the buildings and spaces around it, form one complete, unified whole. The buildings flanking the Church, when considered in relation to this whole are not buildings but are enframing ‘walls’ and the Church is in the center of a garden or park with walls for inclosure [sic]. The first problem, then, is to preserve this balance in emphasis, to achieve a design which complements that of The Mother Church and its surroundings.

“But the Publishing House is a separate entity with its own work to perform. Besides playing its part in the whole design, it must also be allowed to express its own personality. This is the second problem.”<sup>19</sup>

In his proposal to the Building Committee, Churchill described The Mother Church as “the dominating architectural keynote of any development which takes place [there].”<sup>20</sup> He recommended a “grand entrance front ...to reveal the scale of this dome [of The Mother Church],” and suggested that “the logical place to open up the church and give it the needed setting would be the flat side along St. Paul Street.”<sup>21</sup> Churchill consciously arranged the building as visually subservient to the Church in keeping with his ideas regarding the overall site layout, noting that “[a]ll along the Church [the Publishing House] draws back, making greater spaces between. In fact, its sides become mere walls. It calls no attention to itself in any way. In design you might say it ‘bows’ to the Church.”<sup>22</sup> At the western end of the site near Massachusetts Avenue, however, “once the building has gone beyond the Church... it rears upward quickly, expressing its own ‘personality’ in no uncertain terms.”<sup>23</sup> Churchill accommodated the extensive office and administrative spaces required by the Publishing Society, as well as the public-oriented sales and support spaces, in the nine-story tower at the west end of the building. This layout successfully served both the functional and aesthetic purposes of the project, creating a clear distinction between the manufacturing and administrative activities within the structure, and between the central Mother Church and peripheral publishing offices on the site.

For the exterior treatment of the Publishing House, Churchill chose a Classical Modernist style, typically associated with public and commercial architecture of

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<sup>19</sup> Millicent J. Taylor, “Architecture of New Publishing House Harmonized with the Mother Church,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 6, 1932.

<sup>20</sup> Preston, “History of the Christian Science Publishing Society,” 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, “Architecture of New Publishing House Harmonized with the Mother Church.”

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

the Depression era. Boston has several other distinguished examples of the style, including the award-winning Motor Mart Garage at Park Square (1926-1927), the Churchill-designed Liberty Mutual building on Berkeley Street (1937), and the New England Mutual Life Insurance building on Boylston Street (1938-42). The Christian Science Publishing House references classical architectural precedents and traditions to create a building that harmonizes with the Revival styles of the Original Mother Church and the Extension, but remains distinctly modern. The exterior treatment of the building is distinguished by rhythmic proportions, prominent vertical and horizontal symmetries, and hierarchical forms.

When completed, the Christian Science Publishing House was considered to be one of the largest office building in New England, occupying approximately 53,000 square feet. It was surrounded by grassy park-like plots on three sides and completely integrated with the Church complex. A tunnel connected it to the original Publishing House building. At the time of its construction, the Publishing House defined the northern boundary of, and added a significant architectural counterpoint to, the evolving Christian Science complex.

The second Christian Science Publishing House Building is illustrative of the expansion of the Church's activities, both as a leader in the field of publishing and as the owner of an increasingly large piece of real estate in the city center. The building is also important for its associations with the development of *The Christian Science Monitor*, the world's largest church-owned newspaper and an internationally respected and award-winning news publication. The newspaper's administrative offices remain in the Publishing House Building today, although all printing activities now take place offsite.

### ***Christian Science Plaza Expansion Project***

Despite its two large administrative buildings, overcrowding of the Church's facilities was noted by the 1940s. By the early 1960s, the Church's more than 2000 employees were spread out in 10 different locations in the Back Bay, overseeing more than 3300 branches in 50 countries. To alleviate this situation, between the 1940s and 1960s, the church assembled a parcel of more than 22 acres of land and purchased Falmouth Street, St. Paul Street, and part of Norway Street from the City of Boston. In 1962, the Church began plans to expand and consolidate its headquarters.

The project anticipated the year 1966, which marked the centennial of the spiritual healing that led to Mary Baker Eddy's founding of The First Church of Christ, Scientist. Significantly, the new church complex was intended not only to provide "unified, efficient facilities," but also to demonstrate "the freshness and modernity of Christian Science."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Christian Science Center Progress Report," No. 4, 1971 (on file, Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA).

I.M. Pei & Partners was hired in 1963 to produce a master plan, which encompassed new Church-related buildings, a major addition to The Mother Church Extension, an underground parking structure, and open space in the Christian Science Center complex, as well as private residential and commercial development at the perimeter of the site. Church Park Apartments, located across Massachusetts Avenue from The Mother Church, was one of several private developments that resulted. Completed in 1973 on land sold by the Church, it originally provided 25% of its apartments for low and middle income housing in what was said to be one of the largest apartment buildings in New England at the time.

The master plan project was intended to address the need for more “open space, better housing, convenient shopping, and improved traffic and parking” in the neighborhood.<sup>25</sup> It was also projected to double the real estate assessment of the area and provide greatly increased tax revenues to the City of Boston, as the Sunday School Building and Mother Church were the only tax-exempt properties in the project area.

Presented to the Christian Science Church’s Board of Directors for approval in April 1964, the master plan underwent governmental review and approval into the fall of 1965. Design work for the entire plaza project, including the underground garage and landscaped open spaces, occurred from October 1965 to April 1968, with demolition and land clearance beginning in 1966. The construction contract was awarded to Aberthaw Construction Company in 1968 (Aberthaw had also built the Christian Science Publishing House in the 1930s), and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 15, 1968. Phases I and II of the project – the three new buildings, an underground parking garage for 550 cars, and landscaped open space along Huntington Avenue – were completed in 1972. The Portico addition to The Mother Church Extension and the landscaping of the Massachusetts Avenue plaza were completed in 1975. Richard White Sons of Newton was the general contractor for the Portico project.

Design of the Christian Science Plaza project is formally credited to I.M. Pei & Partners (Araldo Cossutta, partner in charge), and Cossutta & Ponte, Associated Architects. The project has been awarded numerous honors, including the Prestressed Concrete Institute Award (1973), the Design Award of the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute (1975), the Harleston Parker Award from the Boston Society of Architects, for “the most beautiful piece of architecture” built in Greater Boston in the past ten years (1975), and the Annual Tucker Award, for the Portico, from the Building Stone Institute (1980). The landscape design for the project has won awards from the American Association of Nurserymen (First Place Award, 1975), the American Society of Landscape Architects (Professional

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<sup>25</sup> “Christian Science Center Progress Report,” No. 19, 1968 (on file, Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA).

Awards of Excellence, Honor Award, 1987), and the Boston Society of Landscape Architects (Mature Projects, Honor Award, 1988).

Along with the nearby Hancock Tower (also by I.M. Pei's firm; completed in 1975) and Prudential Center, the Christian Science Plaza was instrumental in revitalizing downtown Boston at a critical point in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Edward Logue, the head of the Boston Redevelopment Authority through most of the 1960s, implemented a sweeping program of urban renewal, and the Christian Science Center was an integral part of the 500-acre Fenway Urban Renewal Area.

The Christian Science Center, specifically the Administration Building, represented, at the time, the terminus of the "High Spine," a linear concentration of high-rise buildings proposed by the Boston Society of Architects in 1961. The High Spine concept extended north-south along Washington Street in the Central Business District and turned to run west along Boylston Street to Massachusetts Avenue, making future large-scale development coherent and protecting the historic character of the Back Bay.

Like the contemporaneous Government Center project (for which I.M. Pei also prepared the master plan), the full-scale Christian Science Plaza project combined public and private investment; institutional, commercial, and residential development; and historic and modern buildings. The Christian Science Plaza was remarkably successful in implementing these visionary goals – architecturally, economically, and socially – and weaving them into the fabric of the neighboring communities.

The Modernist-era Christian Science Plaza is a major example of the firm of I.M. Pei and Partners and of the lead design architect, Araldo Cossutta, and a singular achievement of civic design in the Modernist period. The Pei/Cossutta plan made the Christian Science Center one of the most monumental – and successful – public spaces in Boston. Early residential and commercial development had largely obscured the church edifices, except for the dome of The Mother Church Extension. As described in the *AIA Guide to Boston*, Pei and Cossutta's plan "demolished these obstacles and made geometric sense of what had been built, much in the way Bernini's piazza for St. Peter's in Rome monumentalized an already existing building."<sup>26</sup>

The Reflecting Pool is the central and organizing feature in the expansion plan. It is unbroken in length and unencumbered by any element visually encroaching upon the volume of space that it defines. It commands, but is clearly separate and distinct from, the ground plane. Befitting its design as a work of modern minimalism, the Reflecting Pool has an ethereal presence, hovering in space as an

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<sup>26</sup> Susan Southworth and Michael Southworth, *AIA Guide to Boston* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2008), 219.

interface between the earth and the sky, whose unbroken reflection enhances the unity and totality of the composition of the entire complex.

It acts as a figural, unifying tie for all the elements that sit on the plaza. Along its northern edge, the Reflecting Pool defines and unites the Colonnade Building, the Original Mother Church, and The Mother Church Extension. As an axis, it ties the horizontality of the Sunday School Building back to the dramatic verticality of the Administration Building, helping these elements of the complex to achieve balance. The Reflecting Pool provides an effective and emphatic boundary between the more active pedestrian zone on the north side of the Plaza and the planted areas and bosque on the Plaza's south side.

The Mother Church Extension, which had been built with virtually no setback from St. Paul Street, was given the grand entrance it deserved when the church was able to buy the city street, build the present monumental portico, and create a forecourt along Massachusetts Avenue. On the urban scale, this new composition has the added advantage of also “draw[ing] the earlier, Beaux-Arts civic monuments of Symphony and Horticultural Halls effectively into the overall scheme.”<sup>27</sup>

A unique aspect of the Christian Science Plaza lies in the balance that it achieves between a traditional, European type of hardscape plaza throughout the site – particularly at the north side of the Reflecting Pool, and the openings that it presents toward Huntington Avenue, in the form of the bosques and planters – and the open lawn area at the forecourt of The Mother Church Extension along Massachusetts Avenue.

The individual buildings vary in shape and character, but are unified in structural systems, material, color, and design themes such as ground-level piers, frameless window glazing, and textural façades. While the buildings are individually distinctive, they are virtually inseparable in terms of architectural and historical significance. Built around a monumental void, the sculptural structures are joined together by a sophisticated site plan and meaningful landscape design, forming a rich ensemble in the core of a densely-built institutional, commercial, and residential neighborhood.

The systematic approach to the design of the Christian Science Plaza appears on a full range of scales. It encompassed the exacting detailing of building and landscape components—such as the precision concrete forming of the buildings and the pavement patterns in the plaza—as well as the asymmetrical placement of buildings on the site in relationship to each other and to adjacent development.

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<sup>27</sup> David Fixler and Helene Lipstadt, “Large Scale Interventions in Boston’s Back Bay – 1950-Present” (Unpublished paper, 2000), 5.



“The Colonnade Building, seemingly inspired by Le Corbusier’s highly sculptural Chandigarh with its deep recesses and trough roof, screens the chaotic urban fill behind it. It also creates a backdrop for the plaza and its nearly 700-foot-long reflecting pool.<sup>28</sup> The tower is a vertical focus balancing the dome and terminating the plaza. Access to the underground parking garage is inconspicuous. At the southwest corner of the plaza, the quarter-circle Sunday School screens Horticultural Hall and connects the Huntington and Massachusetts Avenue faces.”<sup>29</sup>

Araldo Cossutta lyrically described both the architectural and urban design aspirations of the project in a statement published in 1973:

“In the Church Center buildings, architecture, structure and function are inseparable. This means that all visible elements, such as walls, columns and beams are structurally and mechanically integrated and obtain an intrinsically simple architectural expression. . .

“The three new buildings are all built of cast-in-place architectural concrete matching in color the limestone of the Church and the Publishing House. Concrete is a humble but infinitely versatile material. Aesthetically, it has neither song nor story. It speaks mainly through the shapes and forms it is cast into. And the forms of the Church Center buildings are the result of several applied principles, some very old, some completely new. First, these forms are structural[,] and structure is for architecture the perennial source of strength, the spring of clarity. In the case of the Church buildings, the distinction between structure and architecture therefore is irrelevant, for it is one and the same. Second, the external formal expression is directly derived from the simple uninterrupted geometric shapes they enclose. The Sunday School grows out of its quarter circle auditorium or the Administration Building from a simple uninterrupted rectangular space modular for offices[,] to which vertical circulation elements, such as stairs, elevators and mechanical shafts or ramps[,] are added, as the case may be. And third, the mechanical services and air conditioning are all integral with the structure[,] which remains exposed and visible on the inside, as well as on the outside of all three buildings. . .

“Five months before the [Master Plan] report was submitted, Vincent Ponte and I criss-crossed and paced for the first time the

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<sup>28</sup> Le Corbusier, High Court Building, Chandigarh, Punjab, India; 1951-1956.

<sup>29</sup> Southworth and Southworth, *AIA Guide to Boston*, 219-220.

site of the future Church Center. Confronting us was a large assemblage of land, at that time mostly covered with low buildings and overshadowed by the scale of the new adjacent Prudential tower, polarizing all the attention within the district. Yet, this was not just another agglomeration of city blocks. Less than a century had passed since the surrounding areas were reclaimed from the waters of the Back Bay and then, by a series of independent actions, and certainly not according to a pre-meditated scheme, a triangular tracery of streets gradually emerged, delineating city blocks in the shape of equilateral triangles. The epicenter of these triangular blocks was first occupied in 1894 by the Original Mother Church and eleven years later by its Extension. But for a few glimpses from Massachusetts Avenue or through the small Church Park facing Huntington Avenue, the Edifice was visually cut off by rows of low buildings in front of it and by-passed by both arteries framing two of the three sides of the equilateral triangle. Even the dome of The Mother Church Extension, lending for decades a characteristic silhouette to the Back Bay, was about to be submerged by high-rise structures rising around the Prudential tower.

“It was clear from the outset that the new Church Center could not compete with the skyscrapers of commerce on their own terms. Our concept, therefore, was to surround the Church Edifice on two sides with open space reaching out to Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues and to frame and contain [it] by long horizontal 11-story residential buildings on the other sides of the two avenues. Further, we anchored the apexes of the triangular composition by 30-story residential towers serving, in a sense, as entrance portals to the new Center. Thus, a significant urban space was carved out[,] reserving for the Original Church and the Extension a pivotal role[,] and creating from the pedestrian’s vista an appropriate horizontal scale in peace with our giant neighbors. Major benefits were derived from this decision. First, the triangular open space symbolically exposed and defined the edges of Boston’s Fenway and South End district, historically separated from the elegant Back Bay because of the divisive presence of railroads, which the Prudential Center to a large degree succeeded in bridging. Thus, the landscaped Church space has a unifying role for the entire Back Bay. Second, the new dimension of Prudential’s development, so much out of harmony with adjacent neighborhoods, was gradually de-escalated and brought down to the scale of three-and four-story walk-ups.

“But the Church Center’s 1,100 feet long open space along Huntington Avenue also created problems. While large enough to

counterpoint the height of the Prudential tower, the space seemed too large for the scale of The Mother Church. And, it was for that reason that the new 28-story Administration Building was placed, free standing, at the edge of Huntington Avenue[,] announcing the Center as far as Copley Square, but at the same time sub-dividing the open space into smaller quadrants and cropping with the vertical edge of the tower, the image of the Church.

“Our pre-occupation with the scale and nature of this vast space was long-drawn and constant. Today, it is difficult to image the Church Center without its Reflecting Pool. Yet, the idea was not immediately evident. Apart from the symbolic aspect of water in Christianity and its capacity to reflect and enhance reality, the water mirror lends character, resolves the dilemma as to the architectural purpose of the space[,] and clearly organizes the relationship of the Sunday School, Colonnade and the Administration Buildings[,] which[,] together with the Publishing House, support as they do, the Church Edifice. . .

“The Church Center grew out of the specific attributes of a unique urban environment. And the buildings, although not in a language of words, do communicate through their given forms, like faces carved out of stone or concrete. They engage in a dialogue, like actors on a stage, among themselves and with us as spectators. Some buildings must be the stars, others the chorus. Some must shine and other must support. If they act in concert and harmony, their message is clear and strong. If not, it will be muted and weak. That is why harmony is the very essence of architecture, as gravity is to weight.

“And what are the words we have tried to breathe into these inert building forms? We hope they will convey a sense of community with the surrounding city and a message of friendly welcome to all men. We hope they will say: this is the World Center of the Christian Science Faith. And above all, we hope they will express the spirit of search and truth to which both religion and art are dedicated.”<sup>30</sup>

In the intervening years, historians and critics have generally affirmed these accomplishments of the Christian Science Plaza design. Donlyn Lyndon describes the character of the new buildings as

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<sup>30</sup> I.M. Pei & Partners and Cossutta & Ponte, Associated Architects, “Christian Science Church Center; Boston, Massachusetts; Fact Sheet,” May 1973 (on file, Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA), 4-7.

“Large, austere and very carefully crafted. . . They are composed of grids and colonnades of a regular pattern framed in large masses of concrete that serve as attics, cornices or endpieces. The buildings are executed in the flawlessly formed and finished concrete for which the Pei office is renowned. . . . and cast in sections carefully stacked upon each other in a manner reminiscent of the severe granite-slab buildings of the waterfront.”<sup>31</sup>

Christopher Jencks notes the melding of landscape and architecture in the Plaza design; Kidder Smith observes the combination of muscular architecture and a tranquil setting, “a careful orchestration of buildings old and new, one that exerted a salutary upgrading of an entire urban area.”<sup>32</sup> Douglass Shand-Tucci declares that:

“The Christian Science Center. . . is easily the most serene architectural experience in the city; the one experience. . . in which the essence of the overall Modernist vision can be felt in all its power. . . Here as nowhere else in Boston one finally sees some merit in Corb[usier]’s urban planning. Having had the worst of it in the West End, in the Christian Science Center, Boston got the best of it.”<sup>33</sup>

Despite its monumental scale and private ownership, the Plaza is a heavily-used public space, activated by its strong, porous pedestrian edges; a continuous ground plane, easily accessed from the adjoining streets; the coherent scale and siting of its buildings and landscape features; clear views with focal points, destinations, and defined circulation paths; water and other landscape elements that invite both meditation and active participation; and human-scaled contrasts of form, light, texture, color, and shape.

The buildings and landscape of the Christian Science Plaza project collectively represent the stature and aspirations of the Church in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Although membership was reportedly declining from an early 20<sup>th</sup> century peak, the Church’s core services and publishing operations remained strong. Its determination to make a religious, architectural, and social statement of lasting consequence is evident in the tranquil but monumental character of the new Christian Science Center.

The Christian Science Church is currently in the midst of a long-term strategic planning process, begun in 2003, to consolidate its operations and personnel in the Publishing House building, lease the three Pei/Cossutta buildings to other entities,

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<sup>31</sup> Lyndon, *The City Observed*, 201.

<sup>32</sup> G.E. Kidder Smith, *Source Book of American Architecture: 500 Notable Buildings from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 553.

<sup>33</sup> Douglass Shand-Tucci, *Built in Boston: City and Suburb 1800-1950* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978, 1988, 1999), 284.



and provide new development on the site. (*See Section 5.0 for information regarding the Church's current development plans*).

### 3.3 Architects and Landscape Architects

#### *Franklin I. Welch*

(Original Mother Church)

Little is known about the architect of the Original Mother Church edifice. Welch (1852-1930) was a resident of Malden, Massachusetts, and was not professionally trained as an architect. The Christian Science building was his first commission, and he does not appear to have worked on many subsequent projects. He is also credited with the First Baptist Church in North Reading, Massachusetts, built in 1927.

#### *Charles Brigham*

(principal architect for The Mother Church Extension)

Charles Brigham was born in 1841 in Watertown, MA, where he lived until his death in 1925. After working as a draftsman for Gridley J. F. Bryant from 1866-1886, Brigham maintained a practice in Boston in partnership with John H. Sturgis. He became a charter member of the Boston Society of Architects in 1870.<sup>34</sup> Following Sturgis' death in 1888, Brigham partnered with John C. Spofford until 1892, when he began working independently.<sup>35</sup> He collaborated with fellow Boston architects Charles Coveney and Henry V. Bisbee, and later with Chicago architect Solon S. Beman, on the designs for The Mother Church Extension. After the completion of that project, Coveney, Bisbee, and Brigham formed a firm together.

In the early years of his career, Brigham worked primarily on residences in the Back Bay and in Newport, Rhode Island. The firm of Sturgis & Brigham was also responsible for the designs of the Museum of Fine Arts at Copley Square (1876-1878, demolished 1906), the Church of the Advent on Brimmer Street (1879-1880), and the Boston Young Men's Christian Association Building at the corner of Boylston and Berkeley streets (1883, destroyed in 1910 fire). During his association with Spofford, Brigham obtained commissions for extensions to the Maine and Massachusetts State Capitols.<sup>36</sup> On his own, he continued to design large houses for clients living in various cities. The Albert C. Burrage House at 314 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, built in 1899, is one of his most prominent projects.<sup>37</sup>

Brigham also continued to receive many institutional commissions, including the State Hospital in Foxborough, Massachusetts (1891 and 1899), the Millicent Library (1881), Town Hall (1892), and Rogers Memorial Church (1901-02) in

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<sup>34</sup> Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), 76.

<sup>35</sup> Edwin M. Bacon, ed., *Boston of To-day; A Glance at Its History and Characteristics* (Boston: Boston Post Publishing Company, 1892), 176.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Oscar Fay Adams, "A New England Architect and His Work," *New England Magazine*, June 1907.

Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and the Institution for Savings in New Bedford, Massachusetts (1897). He worked with Coveney on the Fairhaven church project, and again with Coveney and Bisbee on St. Mark the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts (1914).

### ***Solon Spencer Beman***

(consulting architect for The Mother Church Extension)

Beman was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1853. Beginning in 1870, he trained with Richard Upjohn, the leading architectural ecclesiologist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the designer of numerous urban Episcopal churches, and became an associate designer in Upjohn's New York firm. Beman was greatly influenced by Upjohn's writings and beliefs on the moral aspect of architecture. In 1877, he went into business for himself.

After designing a mansion in Chicago for George Pullman, the railroad magnate, Beman was hired to develop a company town for Pullman on Lake Calumet, south of Chicago. He moved to Chicago and worked on the town of Pullman from 1879 to 1884. This "noble experiment" in city planning brought him some professional renown, and he established a successful practice designing private residences and office buildings during the 1880s and 1890s. Louis Sullivan, one of Chicago's most well-known architects, worked for a time in Beman's office. Beman designed two buildings for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the Mines and Mining and Merchant Tailors buildings.<sup>38</sup>

Beman's design was selected from a group of twelve proposals for The First Church of Christ, Scientist built in Chicago in 1897. Subsequently, he became the unofficial "official" architect for the larger church organization, eventually converting to Christian Science himself. He received a steady stream of branch church commissions during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, designing approximately 40 churches throughout the country, including six in Chicago. Beman developed three church designs, complete with ready-to-order plans, from which branches could choose. After working on The Mother Church Extension in Boston, Beman was hired to design the c.1908 Publishing House building (demolished in 1973) and redesigned Mary Baker Eddy's residence in Chestnut Hill.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Chester Lindsay Churchill***

(Christian Science Publishing House)

Churchill was born in 1891 in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and educated at Harvard. He received his architectural degree in 1915 and worked as a draftsman for many years, interrupted by military service during World War I. From 1919

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<sup>38</sup> Ivey, *Prayers in Stone*, 139-145.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119.

through 1930, he was employed by the Boston firm of Richardson, Barott & Richardson, eventually becoming managing architect. In 1930, Churchill opened his own firm at 9 Newbury Street, where he remained through the 1950s. In 1955, he established a second office on East 49<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City.

Following the success of his 1932 design for the Christian Science Publishing House, Churchill went on to design numerous large administrative office buildings in urban settings. Major works include the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company Home Office at 175 Berkeley Street (1937), the Watertown Arsenal Headquarters Building in Watertown, MA (1943), the American Brass Company Administration Building in Ansonia, CT (1947-1949), and the Eastern Airlines Terminal at JFK International Airport in New York City (1955).

### ***I.M. Pei & Partners***

(Christian Science Plaza buildings and landscape)

Born in China in 1917, I.M. (Ieoh Ming) Pei was educated at MIT and the Harvard School of Design, where he studied with Walter Gropius. He subsequently taught at Harvard from 1945-48, while also working for architect Hugh Stubbins and as a concrete designer for the Boston engineering firm of Stone and Webster. In 1948, Pei went to work for William Zeckendorf, one of the country's largest real estate developers, in New York City; Pei was head of the architectural division of Zeckendorf's contracting firm, Webb and Knapp, Inc. I.M. Pei & Associates was formed in 1955, but did not formally separate from Webb & Knapp until 1960. The firm name changed to I.M. Pei & Partners in 1966, and Pei Cobb Freed & Partners in 1989.

Known for its highly collaborative management style, the firm's large portfolio of commercial, institutional, and civic buildings is distinguished by "the fundamental Pei concerns for rigorous geometry, innovative technology, quality materials, and crisply executed details."<sup>40</sup> Pei's designs are noted for their expressive use of reinforced concrete: "In an effort to contain costs, speed-up construction time and produce a more refined. . . expression. . . Pei developed a basic system of load-bearing, reinforced concrete screen walls that serve both as structure and, with glass infilling, as façade."<sup>41</sup>

On an urban scale, architectural historians have noted Pei's characteristic "complex arrangement of masses and rich contrast of materials, forms, and spaces."<sup>42</sup> Pei's large-scale developments are notable for their interdependent groups of buildings, integral traffic and parking, sequence of pedestrian spaces, and physical interrelationships between city blocks. Pei himself, in an interview

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<sup>40</sup> Carter Wiseman, *I.M. Pei: A Profile in American Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001), 71.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Heyer, *Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966, 1978), 315.

<sup>42</sup> Adolf K. Placzek, ed., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 34.

with *The Christian Science Monitor*, emphasized his interest in “cohesion, texture, and humanistic character” in both building design and city plans.<sup>43</sup>

Major projects include Mile High Center in Denver (1954-59), Place Ville Marie in Montreal (1956-65), Kips Bay Plaza, New York (1959-63), the Green Center for the Earth Sciences at MIT (1964), Washington Square East/Society Hill, Philadelphia (1964), L’Enfant Plaza, Washington, D.C. (1965), the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder (1967), John Hancock Tower in Boston (1975), the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1978), the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston (1979), and the Louvre Pyramid in Paris (1989). Other significant Boston projects by Pei’s firm include the master plan for Government Center (1961), Harbor Towers (1973), and the West Wing of the Museum of Fine Arts (1980).

Honors granted to I.M. Pei and his firm include the Arnold Brunner Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1961), for excellence in the field of architecture; the AIA Firm Award (1968); the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1983); the AIA Gold Medal (1979); and the Gold Medal of the Academie d’Architecture, France (1981).

### ***Araldo Cossutta***

(Christian Science Plaza buildings and landscape)

Born in Yugoslavia in 1925, Araldo Cossutta was educated at the University of Belgrade (1945-46), the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (1947-50), and Harvard University (1950-52). Before joining I.M. Pei & Associates in 1956, Cossutta worked for LeCorbusier in Paris in 1949, and for Michael Hare and Associates, in New York, from 1952-55. Cossutta was a partner in Pei’s firm from 1963 to 1973, when he established his own firm, Cossutta & Ponte, with planner and fellow Pei alumnus Vincent Ponte. The office was later known as Cossutta & Associates; it was based in New York, with branches in Paris and Brussels.

Cossutta was the design architect for several major Pei & Partners projects, including University Gardens Apartments in Chicago (1961); Denver Hilton Hotel (1962); MIT’s Green Center for Earth Sciences (1964); L’Enfant Plaza, Phase I, in Washington, D.C. (1968); a master plan for the Tete de la Defense, Paris (1971); the Third Church of Christ, Scientist, and The Christian Science Monitor Building in Washington, D.C. (1971); and the Christian Science Center, Boston (1975).

Cossutta & Associates worked primarily on commercial office projects and urban redevelopment, including master plan, interior design, and architecture for Cityplace Center in Dallas (1989, 1988, 1977); Pittsburgh City Center (1987); Riverplace in Columbus, Ohio (1986); 585 Park Tower in New York City (1983);

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<sup>43</sup> “Interview with I.M. Pei,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 16, 1978, 33.



development plans for Portsmouth, Virginia (1983) and Newport News, Virginia (1982); and the Long Wharf Marriott Hotel, Boston (1982). Outside the United States, Cossutta's projects include the 42-story Credit Lyonnais Tower in Lyon, France (1977) and urban development plans for cities in Canada, France, and Belgium.

Cossutta was Pei's partner in charge of Boston's Christian Science Center project, and of a contemporaneous (though much smaller) church and administrative building for the Christian Science Church in Washington, D.C.:

"The symmetry and order expressed in both the Boston Christian Science complex and the Washington Third Church complex reflected the concern of the Pei firm for monumentality and strict order. The designs also reflect Cossutta's classical training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Indeed, Cossutta was the most traditionally trained of Pei's partners, and he described himself . . . as a 'modern classicist.' Following the general philosophy of the Pei firm, Cossutta admired the beauty of exposed structure in ancient Roman and Greek architecture and engineering. . .

"To achieve what he termed 'integral beauty' in modern architecture, Cossutta used cast-in-place, poured concrete, his specialty, in a variety of textures and hues. 'Concrete has great integrity,' he said. . . 'it is the same material inside and out.' In an article published in *Progressive Architecture* in 1966, Cossutta described the growing preference of many architects in the postwar period for exposed, cast-in-place concrete. This use of exposed structural members was a break from conventional curtain wall construction in which the concrete frame was ordinarily sheathed in metal or glass."<sup>44</sup>

### ***Vincent Pasciuto-Ponte***

(Christian Science Plaza buildings and landscape)

As described in a 1973 press release by I.M. Pei & Partners, Ponte served as

"City Planning Consultant to the Christian Science Church Center since its inception, [and was] Boston-born and Boston-educated. Graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1946, he has been involved. . . in the design of downtown areas in cities in the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia. His work for the Center, in close collaboration with the architect, Araldo Cossutta, involved the analysis of land uses, present and projected,

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<sup>44</sup> Committee of 100 on the Federal City, "D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board Application for Historic Landmark; Third Church of Christ, Scientist and The Christian Science Monitor Building, 1601 I Street, N.W.," 1991, 8-9.

around The Mother Church[,] with the goal of relating the Center functionally and aesthetically to the highest possible degree with its environment.”<sup>45</sup>

***Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay***

(Christian Science Plaza landscape)

The multidisciplinary office founded by Hideo Sasaki in 1953 is credited with the landscape design of the 1960s and 1970s expansion at the Christian Science Center. According to sources within the firm, hardscape elements within the new open spaces of the Center, including the pool, planters, benches, and fountain, were designed by Cossutta’s team at I.M. Pei, and Sasaki was primarily responsible for the design and selection of trees and other plant materials.

Stuart Dawson was the partner in charge of the Christian Science Plaza project. A landscape architect and urban designer, Dawson was a founding principal of Sasaki Associates. He has been involved with the firm in major urban and waterfront developments, college and university campuses, museums, and corporate headquarters, including the Deere & Company Corporate Headquarters, Charleston Waterfront Park, and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Dawson was given the American Society of Landscape Architects Medal, the organization’s highest award, in 1999.

An internationally renowned landscape architect, Hideo Sasaki (1919-2000) was educated at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Illinois in Chicago, and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he served as chairman of the landscape architecture department from 1958 to 1968. His landscape, planning, and architecture firm is known for its innovative work on suburban corporate headquarters, college campuses, urban parks, and large-scale urban design improvements across the country. As a teacher, “he helped to revolutionize the study of landscape architecture by tying it to the larger issues of planning and by breaking down the traditional barriers between practice and teaching.”<sup>46</sup>

Sasaki was appointed to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts by President Kennedy in 1961, and re-appointed by President Johnson in 1965. Among the honors bestowed upon him are American Society of Landscape Architects Medal in 1971 (Sasaki was the first recipient of this award); the Allied Professions Medal from the American Institute of Architects in 1973; and Harvard University’s Centennial Medal in 1999, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the school’s department of landscape architecture, “honoring extraordinary achievement in landscape

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<sup>45</sup>I.M. Pei & Partners and Cossutta & Ponte, “Christian Science Church Center; Fact Sheet,” 8.

<sup>46</sup>Sasaki Associates, “Who We Are,” <http://www.sasaki.com/who/origins.cgi>.

architecture.”<sup>47</sup> Still located in Watertown, MA the firm is known today as Sasaki Associates, Inc.

The firm’s notable projects include Greenacre Park in NYC, Copley Square in Boston, Constitution Plaza in Hartford, Washington Square Village in Manhattan, the University of Colorado campus, Pennsylvania Avenue landscape and urban design improvements in Washington, D.C., and the Charleston, SC waterfront. In Boston, Sasaki Associates is also known for its design of the Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park (1976).

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<sup>47</sup> Anne Raver, “Hideo Sasaki, 80, Influential Landscape Architect, Dies,” *The New York Times*, September 25, 2000.

### 3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation

The Christian Science Center is significant in Boston's religious history as well as in the city's influence on national and international religious history. It provides fine examples of the work of three local architects important to the development of Boston and the surrounding region in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and leading examples of the work of nationally and internationally prominent architects and landscape architects of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the property represents an exceptional example of modernist urban planning and development that amplifies its historic context.

Surveyed by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1984 as part of the Fenway Study Area, the Christian Science Publishing House and The Mother Church buildings were evaluated as resources of local, state, and regional significance. These buildings were recommended for National Register listing and for individual Boston Landmark designation, in both cases as individual resources and as part of a potential Symphony District. The modernist buildings and landscape were not included in that survey project, because of their relatively recent age.

The Christian Science Center meets the following criteria for Landmark designation, found in Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, with significance above the local level, as required in Section 2 of Chapter 772:

***B. A property with prominent associations with the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, Commonwealth, region, or nation.***

As the world headquarters of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, the Christian Science Center exemplifies an important aspect of the religious history of Boston and of the nation. The property also represents an outstanding success of the nationwide, mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century urban renewal movement.

***C. A property associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.***

The Christian Science Center is closely associated with the life and work of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), the founder of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, who personally guided the early development of the property.

***D. A property representative of architectural design, craftsmanship, or distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction or development, or a notable work of a designer or builder.***

The Christian Science Center complex is a significant work of architecture and landscape architecture that combines individually distinctive elements

within a significant, cohesive ensemble. The scale of the complex and the attention to quality and detail in the construction of the buildings, the elaboration of open space, and engagement with adjacent neighborhoods attest to the prominence of the Christian Science movement from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The design integrates the work of several architects who were prominent on the regional and/or national level: Charles Brigham, Solon S. Beman, I.M. Pei, Araldo Cossutta, and the landscape architecture firm, Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay.



## **4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS**

### **4.1 Current Assessed Value**

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, parcel 0401162000 (containing The Mother Church) has an assessed value of \$7,350,900.00, with the land valued at \$7,350,900.00 and the building valued at \$0.00.

Parcel 0401164000 (containing the plaza west of The Mother Church) has an assessed value of \$5,446,900.00, with the land valued at \$5,446,900.00 and buildings valued at \$0.00.

Parcel 0401185000 (containing the Publishing House) has an assessed value of \$16,423,000.00, with the land valued at \$9,805,700.00 and the building valued at \$6,617,300.00.

Parcel 0401150000 (containing the plaza and Reflecting Pool, the Administration Building, the Church Colonnade Building, and the Sunday School Building) has an assessed value of \$78,308,200.00, with the land valued at \$35,541,700.00 and the buildings valued at \$42,766,500.00.

Parcel 0401180000 (containing the grass-covered lawn west of The Mother Church building, rectangular sections west and east of The Mother Church building, and a portion of The Mother Church) has an assessed value of \$25,298,300.00, with the land valued at \$5,961,700.00 and the buildings valued at \$19,336,600.00.

### **4.2 Current Ownership**

The five parcels that comprise the Christian Science Center complex are either directly or beneficially owned by the Board of Directors of The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

The City of Boston Assessor's records list the owner of record for parcel 0401162000 as George Wendell Adams, et al. The owner of record for parcels 0401164000 and 0401185000 is The First Church of Christ, Scientist. The owner of record for parcel 0401150000 is the Church Realty Trust, a Massachusetts Trust formed by The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Board of Directors. The owner of record for parcel 0401180000 is Arthur P. Wuth, et al.

## **5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **5.1 Background**

The Christian Science Center is a multi-use complex that includes six buildings set within a large plaza that incorporates various planted and hardscape areas, along with a fountain and Reflecting Pool. The complex accommodates a variety of diverse uses, including religious worship, office, library, educational, and publishing functions, and includes a significant amount of public open space. In 2008, following the removal of the printing presses and bindery operations from the complex some years earlier, The First Church of Christ, Scientist consolidated their operations in the Publishing House Building. Both the Church Colonnade Building and the Administration Building contain office space leased to third-party tenants. The Church also owns various income-producing properties at a number of parcels surrounding the Christian Science Center complex.

### **5.2 Current Planning Issues**

The First Church of Christ, Scientist has proposed a Plaza Revitalization Project, consisting of large-scale new construction and commercial development at three sites within or adjacent to the Christian Science Center complex, in addition to proposed alterations to plaza areas and to the Reflecting Pool. The aims of the proposed Plaza Revitalization Project are to increase opportunities for real estate revenue that will finance the upkeep of the plaza, to reduce the substantial operating and maintenance costs associated with the plaza complex and Reflecting Pool, and to create self-supporting real estate functions.

The three sites slated for new construction and associated real estate development are:

- the plaza area facing Huntington Avenue and immediately adjacent to the Sunday School Building, where a building approximately 311 feet tall and measuring approximately 150,000 square feet is proposed;
- the grassy triangle bounded by the Colonnade Building, Belvidere Street, and Dalton Street, where a building approximately 532 feet tall and measuring approximately 600,000 square feet is proposed; and
- the surface parking area bounded by Dalton Street, Belvidere Street, and St. Germain Street, adjacent to the grassy triangle, where a building approximately 271 feet tall and measuring 200,000 square feet is proposed.<sup>48</sup>

In total, approximately 950,000 square feet of new construction is proposed at the three sites. Possible uses for the three proposed buildings include residential,

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<sup>48</sup> Note: The surface parking area bounded by Dalton, Belvidere, and St. Germain streets is not included in the boundaries of the Christian Science Center complex under consideration for designation as a Boston Landmark. See Section 6.1 for a description of the recommended boundaries for Landmark Designation.

office, or hotel uses. No demolition of any existing buildings at the Christian Science Center is proposed as part of the Plaza Revitalization Project.

At the plaza, proposed alterations include the reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Reflecting Pool, making it shallower and adding a pedestrian pathway linking Huntington Avenue to the Original Mother Church; the possible addition of winter activities, such as ice skating, to the plaza; the expansion of lawn areas; the addition of shade trees, benches, and tables; and improvements to ground water management systems. Of central concern to the Church is the degree to which water from the Reflecting Pool leaks into the below-grade parking garage and the amount of water that is required to keep the Reflecting Pool filled.

Planning for the Plaza Revitalization Project began in 2006, with the Church working in conjunction with the City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Mayor Thomas M. Menino appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in January 2009, consisting of representatives of adjacent neighborhoods and businesses, representatives of neighborhood and professional organizations, and local and state elected officials. Facilitated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the CAC has met publically approximately once a month since February 2009 and has provided input into the planning process, reviewing iterations of the proposed Plaza Revitalization Project in relation to a number of potential impacts, including massing, open space, and traffic.

In developing the proposed Plaza Revitalization Project, The First Church of Christ, Scientist's stated objectives are threefold: to enhance the complex's open space, to improve the environmental sustainability of the complex, and to identify opportunities for new development.

### **5.3 Current Zoning**

The Christian Science Center complex's "as of right" zoning allows for approximately 650,000 square feet of new construction. The current floor area ratio (FAR) of the complex is approximately 1.2; the allowable FAR is 2.2. The current FAR ranges from 2 to 8 at the areas surrounding the Christian Science Center complex.

Dependent upon zoning approval, the proposed Plaza Revitalization Project would be subject to Article 80 Large Project Review and associated design review, as required, administered by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

## **6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

### **6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission:**

#### **A. Individual Landmark Designation**

The Commission retains the option of designating the Christian Science Center as a Boston Landmark. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcels 0401162000, 0401164000, 0401185000, 0401150000, and 0401180000, and shall address the following exterior elements hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Exterior Features":

- The exterior envelopes of the buildings.
- Landscape elements around and between the buildings on the site, including paving, curbing and gutters, lawn areas, bosques, planters, benches, light fixtures, the Reflecting Pool, and the fountain.

Note: The grassy triangle bordered by Dalton and Belvidere Streets, the passage that separates the triangle from the Colonnade Building, and the service ramp that is set within the passage (all part of parcel 0401150000) are excluded from the recommended boundaries. (*See Figure 35, Recommended boundaries for designation.*)

#### **B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation**

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Exterior Features as a Landmark.

#### **C. Preservation Restriction**

The Commission could recommend that the owner consider a preservation restriction for any or all of the Specified Exterior Features.

#### **D. Preservation Plan**

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

#### **E. National Register Listing**

The Commission has previously recommended listing the Publishing House Building and The Mother Church in the National Register of Historic Places, both individually and as part of a potential Symphony District.

The Commission could recommend that the property owner pursue National Register listing, which would afford limited protection from federal, federally-licensed, or federally-assisted activities and render the property eligible, under certain circumstances, for federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits. Portions of the property remaining in non-profit ownership and use could also

qualify for grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

## **6.2 Impact of Alternatives:**

### **A. Individual Landmark Designation**

Landmark Designation represents the city's highest honor and is therefore restricted to cultural resources of outstanding architectural and/or historical significance. Landmark designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the Specified Exterior Features of the property, in accordance with the standards and criteria adopted as part of the designation. Landmark designation results in listing on the State Register of Historic Places.

### **B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation**

Without Landmark designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Exterior Features, or to extend guidance to the owners under Chapter 772.

### **C. Preservation Restriction**

Chapter 666 of the MGL Acts of 1969 allows individuals to protect the architectural integrity of their property via a preservation restriction. A restriction may be donated to or purchased by any governmental body or nonprofit organization that is capable of acquiring interests in land and that is strongly associated with historic preservation. These agreements are recorded instruments (normally deeds) that run with the land for a specific term or in perpetuity, thereby binding not only the owner who conveyed the restriction, but also subsequent owners. Restrictions typically govern alterations to exterior features and maintenance of the appearance and condition of the property.

A preservation restriction would also afford the owner of the property a one-time income tax deduction, based on the appraised amount of the loss of property value due to the restriction placed on the exterior of the building. Thus, the preservation restriction may offer a financial incentive to preserve the historic fabric of the property.

### **D. Preservation Plan**

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. However, it does not carry regulatory oversight.

### **E. National Register Listing**

National Register listing provides an honorary designation as well as limited protection from federal, federally-licensed, or federally-assisted activities. It



creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register, affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. Tax credits are not available to owners who demolish portions of historic properties.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Christian Science Center complex meets the criteria for Landmark designation as found in Section 4 of Chapter 772, Acts of 1975, as amended, for reasons cited in Section 3.3 of this report:

***B. A property with prominent associations with the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, Commonwealth, region, or nation.***

As the world headquarters of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, the Christian Science Center exemplifies an important aspect of the religious history of Boston and of the nation. The property also represents an outstanding success of the nationwide, mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century urban renewal movement.

***C. A property associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.***

The Christian Science Center is closely associated with the life and work of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), the founder of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, who personally guided the early development of the property.

***D. A property representative of architectural design, craftsmanship, or distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction or development, or a notable work of a designer or builder.***

The Christian Science Center complex is a significant work of architecture and landscape architecture that combines individually distinctive elements within a significant, cohesive ensemble. The scale of the complex and the attention to quality and detail in the construction of the buildings, the elaboration of open space, and engagement with adjacent neighborhoods attest to the prominence of the Christian Science movement from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The design integrates the work of several architects (Charles Brigham, Solon S. Beman, I.M. Pei, Araldo Cossutta) and landscape architects (the landscape architecture firm, Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay) who were prominent on the regional and/or national level.

The Christian Science Center is significant at the national, regional, state, and local level.

The three major components of the complex – The Mother Church buildings, the Publishing House Building, and the 1970s buildings and landscape – remain exceptionally intact. The Center is significant for its scale as a religious complex in Boston, for the architectural distinction of its individual buildings and landscape design, for its associations with regionally and nationally significant architects and landscape architects, and for its status as the international headquarters of The First Church of Christ, Scientist. The complex also achieves

social significance for its extraordinary urban design contributions to the Fenway and Back Bay neighborhoods and to downtown Boston.

Staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission therefore recommends that the Christian Science Center be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. See Section 6.1 for Specified Exterior Features and boundary note; see also Figure 35 - Recommended boundaries for designation.



**Figure 35.** Recommended boundaries for designation. (Boston Landmarks Commission)

## **8.0 GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Per sections, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended) Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Landmark Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the property. The Standards and Criteria both identify and establish guidelines for those features which must be preserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitation to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

As intended by the statute a wide variety of buildings and features are included within the area open to Landmark Designation, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. Some properties of truly exceptional architectural and/or historical value will permit only the most minor modifications, while for some others the Commission encourages changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with the properties' existing features and changed uses.

These Standards and Criteria included in this report are not intended to interfere with the free exercise of religion. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes the unique circumstances when applying architectural guidelines to religious properties and will respect the protection provided such institutions under the U.S. and Massachusetts constitutions as well as applicable statutory safeguards.

In general, the intent of the Standards and Criteria is to preserve existing qualities that engender designation of a property; however, in some cases they have been structured as to encourage the removal of additions that have lessened the integrity of the property.

It is recognized that changes will be required in designated properties for a wide variety of reasons, not all of which are under the complete control of the Commission or the owners. Primary examples are: Building code conformance



and safety requirements; Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems; Changes due to proposed new uses of a property.

The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for a particular property. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the property. In some cases, priorities have been assigned within the Standards and Criteria as an aid to property owners in identifying the most critical design features. The treatments outlined below are listed in hierarchical order from least amount of intervention to the greatest amount of intervention. The owner, manager or developer should follow them in order to ensure a successful project that is sensitive to the historic landmark.

- **Identify, Retain, and Preserve** the form and detailing of the materials and features that define the historic character of the structure or site. These are basic treatments that should prevent actions that may cause the diminution or loss of the structure's or site's historic character. It is important to remember that loss of character can be caused by the cumulative effect of insensitive actions whether large or small.
- **Protect and Maintain** the materials and features that have been identified as important and must be retained during the rehabilitation work. Protection usually involves the least amount of intervention and is done before other work.
- **Repair** the character defining features and materials when it is necessary. Repairing begins with the least amount of intervention as possible. Patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing according to recognized preservation methods are the techniques that should be followed. Repairing may also include limited replacement in kind of extremely deteriorated or missing parts of features. Replacements should be based on surviving prototypes.
- **Replacement** of entire character defining features or materials follows repair when the deterioration prevents repair. The essential form and detailing should still be evident so that the physical evidence can be used to re-establish the feature. The preferred option is replacement of the entire feature in kind using the same material. Because this approach may not always be technically or economically feasible the commission will consider the use of compatible substitute material. The commission does not recommend removal and replacement with new material a feature that could be repaired.
- **Missing Historic Features** should be replaced with new features that are based on adequate historical, pictorial and physical documentation. The

commission may consider a replacement feature that is compatible with the remaining character defining features. The new design should match the scale, size, and material of the historic feature.

- **Alterations or Additions** that may be needed to assure the continued use of the historic structure or site should not radically change, obscure or destroy character defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. The commission encourages new uses that are compatible with the historic structure or site and that do not require major alterations or additions.

In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.

Finally, the Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels:

- **Section 8.3** - Those general Standards and Criteria that are common to all landmark designations (building exteriors, building interiors, landscape features and archeological sites).
- **Sections 9.0 and 10.0** - Those specific Standards and Criteria that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standards and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

## 8.2 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the landmark. In order to provide some guidance for the landmark property's owner, manager or developer and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the proposed work. Note: the examples for each category are not intended to act as a comprehensive list; see Section 8.2.D.

### A. Routine activities which are not subject to review by the Commission:

1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.
  - a. For building maintenance (See also Section 9.0), such activities might include the following: normal cleaning (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass fixture repair/replacement, etc.

- b. For landscape and plaza maintenance (See also Section 10.0), such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of plazas and sidewalks, etc. (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind spot replacement of cracked or broken paving materials, in-kind repainting or refinishing of site furnishings, site lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass fixture repair/replacement, normal plant material maintenance, such as pruning, fertilizing, mowing and mulching, and in-kind replacement of existing plant materials, etc.
2. Routine activities associated with seasonal decorations which do not result in any permanent alterations or attached fixtures.

**B. Activities which may be determined by the staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review, requiring an application to the Commission:**

1. Maintenance and repairs involving no change in design, material, color or outward appearance.
2. In-kind replacement or repair, as described in the Specific Standards and Criteria, Sections 9.0 – 10.0.
3. Phased restoration programs will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review of the entire project plan and specifications; subsequent detailed review of individual construction phases may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff.
4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review; subsequent review of these projects may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff, where design, details, and specifications do not vary from those previously approved.
5. Emergency repairs that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. may be eligible for Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review; permanent repairs will require review as outlined in Section 8.2.

**C. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:**

Reconstruction, restoration, replacement, demolition, or alteration involving change in design, material, color, location, or outward appearance, such as: New construction of any type, removal of existing features or elements, major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, or changes in landforms.

#### **D. Activities not explicitly listed above:**

In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the Executive Director shall determine whether an application is required and if so, whether it shall be an application for a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption.

#### **E. Concurrent Jurisdiction**

In some cases, issues which fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Commission may also fall under the jurisdiction of other city, state and federal boards and commissions such as the Boston Art Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the National Park Service and others. All efforts will be made to expedite the review process. Whenever possible and appropriate, a joint staff review or joint hearing will be arranged.

### **8.3 General Standards and Criteria**

1. The design approach to the property should begin with the premise that the features of historical and architectural significance described within the Study Report must be preserved. In general, this will minimize alterations that will be allowed. Changes that are allowed will follow accepted preservation practices as described below, starting with the least amount of intervention.
2. Changes and additions to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. (The term **later contributing features** shall be used to convey this concept.)
3. Deteriorated materials and/or features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.
4. When replacement of features that define the historic character of the property is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later contributing features.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.
6. New additions or alterations should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.

7. New additions or related new construction should be differentiated from the existing, thus, they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
8. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.
9. Priority shall be given to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or which it can be reasonably inferred may be in the future.
10. Surface cleaning shall use the mildest method possible. Sandblasting, wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted.
11. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for the property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare an historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.
12. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved.

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## 9.0 SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA – EXTERIORS

### 9.1 Introduction

1. The Christian Science Center complex is a renowned work of architecture and landscape design, comprising individually distinctive elements that reflect the evolution of the complex from 1894-1975, that together form a cohesive whole. These Standards and Criteria should be applied with an understanding of the history and significance of the Christian Science Center complex, as described in the full Study Report, Sections 1.0 – 7.0.
2. In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements.
3. These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior alterations, whether permanent or temporary. In the case of proposed temporary installations, the proposed duration of the installation must be clearly described in an application. The Commission may require a shorter duration of a temporary installation than requested. A Certificate of Design Approval will be strictly limited to the approved duration. An extension of the approved duration will require a new application. Any temporary installation that is not removed on or before the approved date of its limited duration, or is not the subject of an application for an extension, will be cited as a violation.
4. Conformance to these Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are they absolute. The Commission has the authority to issue Certificates of Design Approval for projects that vary from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing(s), in accordance with Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.
5. These Standards and Criteria included in this report are not intended to interfere with the free exercise of religion. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes the unique circumstances when applying architectural guidelines to religious properties and will respect the protection provided such institutions under the U.S. and Massachusetts constitutions as well as applicable statutory safeguards.
6. The intent of these Standards and Criteria is to preserve the overall character and appearance of the Christian Science Church complex,



including its buildings, structures, plazas, features and site design in their layout, exterior form, massing, and richness of detail.

7. Demolition of buildings or structures within the Christian Science Church complex is prohibited.
8. The Standards and Criteria acknowledge that there will be changes to the complex and are intended to make the changes sensitive to the architectural character of the buildings and/or site design.
9. The Commission will apply the statement from the enabling legislation, Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, Section 4. Designation by Commission, as follows: “All recommendations [for Standards and Criteria to be adopted by the commission in carrying out its regulatory functions] shall be made in consideration of any master plan, zoning requirements, projected public improvements and existing and proposed renewal and development plans applicable to the section of the city to be affected by the designation....” (Also see Study Report, Section 5.0, Planning Context).
10. The Commission will consider in its review proposals described in the Church’s 2010 Plaza Revitalization Project document (submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority). However, proposed changes to the complex are neither precluded nor implicitly approved by such consideration. For reference, see Section 5.2 – Current Planning Issues.
11. All proposed exterior alterations to the Christian Science Center complex are subject to the terms of the exterior guidelines herein stated. Please also refer to the Specific Standards and Criteria – Landscape, Section 10.0, and the General Standards and Criteria, Section 8.0.
12. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following:

## **9.2 Exterior Walls**

### **A. General**

1. New openings are discouraged but may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.
2. No original existing openings shall be filled or changed in size.
3. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on any elevation.

4. Original or later contributing projections such as oriels and bays shall not be removed.
5. The Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that work proposed to the materials outlined in sections B, C and D be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.

## **B. Masonry**

### **(Brick, Stone, Terra Cotta, Concrete, Stucco and Mortar)**

1. All original or later contributing masonry shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, or consolidating the masonry using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original mortar shall be retained unless deteriorated.
7. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints.
8. Use of mechanical grinders, saws and hammers shall not be allowed. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances the use of mechanical saws and grinders may be required to solve a specific problem. Such work should only be considered under the guidance of a professional building materials conservator; a sample of any proposed mechanical removal or grinding treatment shall be reviewed and approved by the Commission before proceeding with the work.
9. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile and method of application.
10. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing mortar shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.

11. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should be performed only when necessary to halt deterioration.
12. If the building is to be cleaned, the mildest method possible shall be used.
13. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
14. Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods should not be undertaken. Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration. Sandblasting may only be considered if required as part of concrete restoration when necessary for visual consistency. Sandblasting will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require sample panels be reviewed by Commission staff.
15. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.
16. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.
17. Repairs and patching of cast concrete present a challenge to achieving a functional repair with visual consistency. The Commission strongly recommends engaging a professional building materials conservator with experience in cast concrete restoration techniques before carrying out concrete repairs.
18. New penetrations for attachments through masonry and concrete surfaces are strongly discouraged. When necessary, attachment details shall be located in mortar joints, rather than through masonry material; stainless steel hardware is recommended to prevent rust-jacking. New attachments to cast concrete are discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **C. Wood**

1. All original or later contributing wood shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing wood surfaces, features, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of wooden elements shall use the mildest method possible.
7. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light and stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.
8. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using the mildest method possible.
9. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.
10. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

### **D. Architectural Metals**

**(Cast Iron, Steel, Pressed Tin, Copper, Aluminum, Bronze and Zinc)**

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the mildest method possible.
7. Abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
8. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
9. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.
10. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

### **9.3 Windows**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features.**

1. The six significant buildings of the complex represent distinctive periods of architectural design and have varied window types, such as wood windows, stained glass, leaded glass, metal windows, and large butt-glazed window openings. The Boston Landmarks Commission

recommends that work proposed to original or later contributing windows be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator or architect with experience with the specific window type.

2. All original or later contributing windows shall be preserved.
3. The original window design and arrangement of window openings shall be retained.
4. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.
5. Altering or enlarging window openings to convert to doorways is discouraged but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
7. Removal of windows to accommodate mechanical venting louvers is discouraged but may be considered where minimally visible and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
8. Original or later contributing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
9. Deteriorated or missing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
10. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
11. Vinyl or vinyl clad replacement sash shall not be allowed in any case.
12. Aluminum, metal, or metal clad replacement windows will be considered, where appropriate to the particular building in question.
13. Simulated snap-in muntins or between-glass grids shall not be allowed. Where appropriate, surface-applied simulated muntins may be considered if both exterior and interior applied muntins are used in combination with dark-colored spacer bars between the glass.



14. In general, tinted or reflective-coated glass (i.e.: low “e”) is discouraged. Replacement glass should match the original in thickness, color, texture and reflectivity.
15. Metal or vinyl panning of wood frames and molding shall not be allowed. Where metal or aluminum replacement windows are approved, metal or aluminum panning may be considered if the profile is appropriate.
16. In general, exterior storm windows are not appropriate for this property, but may be considered if necessary, provided the installation has a minimal visual impact. However, where storm windows are required, use of interior storm windows is encouraged.
17. Exterior storm windows shall not be allowed for arched windows, leaded glass, faceted frames, or bent (curved) glass.
18. Window frames and sashes should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

**9.4 Storefronts/Office Fronts  
(Includes lobbies glazed with curtain wall or storefront systems.)**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.3, 9.5, 9.10, 9.11 and 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing storefronts/office fronts shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing storefront/office front materials and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing storefront/office front materials, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

6. Original or later integral storefront/office front materials, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Roll-down metal grates or grilles shall not be allowed on the exterior of a storefront. All security devices should be located in the interior.
8. Removal of transoms and installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
9. Storefront/office front elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/storefront.

## **9.5 Entrances/Doors**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.4, 9.6, 9.11 and 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing entrances/doors shall be preserved.
2. The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings shall be retained.
3. Alterations related to improving accessibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis. See Section 9.12.
4. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.
5. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details, and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
6. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative), and details shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
7. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

8. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
9. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
10. Replacement doors shall match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
11. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.
12. Light fixtures shall be of a design and scale that is appropriate to the style and period of the building and should not imitate styles earlier than the building. Contemporary light fixtures will be considered, however. See Section 9.11, Exterior Lighting.
13. Building directory panels, buzzers, alarms, security access systems, and intercom panels shall be mounted inside the recess of the entrance, or where minimally visible on the face of the building.
14. Entrance elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

## **9.6 Porches, Arcades, and Recesses**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.4, 9.8, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13 and Section 10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All porch and arcade materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be preserved.
2. All original or later contributing porch and arcade materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing porch and arcade materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing porch and arcade materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Enclosing original or later contributing porches and arcades is strongly discouraged.
8. Porch and arcade elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/porch and stoop.

**9.7 Ironwork  
(Includes Balconies, Railings and Window Grilles, Fire Escapes.)**

**Refer to Section 9.2 D regarding treatment of materials and features.**

1. All original or later contributing ironwork shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing ironwork materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. New balconies shall not be permitted on primary elevations.

8. New balconies or railings may be considered on secondary elevations if they are required for safety and an alternative egress route is clearly not possible.
9. The installation of security grilles is discouraged.
10. Security grilles, where allowed, shall be mounted within the window reveal and secured into the mortar joints rather than into the masonry or onto the face of the building. Security grilles at cast concrete shall not be allowed.
11. Ironwork elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

## **9.8 Roofs**

**Refer to Section 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.9 and 9.13 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. The roof shape shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (decorative and functional), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered. Synthetic, simulated materials shall not be allowed as replacement for natural materials.
6. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

7. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material.
8. New external gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless it is based on physical or documentary evidence.
9. New skylights may be allowed if they have a flat profile or have a traditional mullion shape. Skylights are allowed on flat roofs where not visible from a public way.

## **9.9 Roof Projections**

**(Includes Penthouses, Roof Decks, Chimneys, Mechanical or Electrical Equipment, Satellite Dishes, Antennas, and other Communication Devices)**

**Refer to Sections 9.9 and 9.13 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. The basic criteria which shall govern whether a roof projection can be added to a roof include:
  - a. The preservation of the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape.
  - b. Height of the existing building.
  - c. Prominence of the existing roof form.
  - d. Visibility of the proposed roof projection.
2. Minimizing or eliminating the visual impact of the roof projection is the general objective and the following guidelines shall be followed:
  - a. Location should be selected where the roof projection is not visible from the street or adjacent buildings; setbacks should be utilized.
  - b. Overall height or other dimensions should be kept to a point where the roof projection is not seen from the street or adjacent buildings.
  - c. Exterior treatment shall relate to the materials, color and texture of the building or to other materials integral to the period and character of the building, typically used for appendages.
  - d. Openings in a penthouse shall relate to the building in proportion, type and size of opening, wherever visually apparent.

## 9.10 Signs, Canopies, and Awnings

**Refer to Sections 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.11 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved.
2. Awnings are not an original feature of any part of the Landmark property; new awnings shall not be allowed.
3. New canopies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. Signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in a structure being reused for a purpose different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.
5. All signage will be subject to the Boston Zoning Code in addition to these guidelines.
6. All signs added to the campus, especially campus directional or information signs, should be part of a consistent system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.
7. All signs added to a particular existing building or open space shall be part of one system of design and reflect a design concept appropriate to the existing historic building, plaza, or open space. See Section 10.7.
8. Approval of a given sign shall be limited to the owner of the business or building and shall not be transferable; signs shall be removed or resubmitted for approval when the operation or purpose of the advertised business changes.
9. New signs and canopies shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
10. The placement and configuration of canopies should relate to the facade openings so as to minimize obscuring significant architectural details.
11. New signs and canopies shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.
12. The design and material of new signs and canopies should reinforce the architectural character of the building.



13. Signs and canopies applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building. New penetrations should be avoided; where necessary, stainless steel hardware is recommended. See Section 9.2 B
14. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.
15. Lettering forms or typeface will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally shall be either contemporary or relate to the period of the building or its later contributing features.
16. Lighting of signs and canopies shall be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.
17. No back-lit or plastic signs shall be allowed on the exterior of the building.
18. Temporary signs and banners will be reviewed for size, location, and attachment details; approvals will be limited to agreed period of installation.

## **9.11 Exterior Lighting**

**Refer to Section 9.2 D regarding treatment of materials and features. Refer to Sections 9.5, 9.10 and Section 10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. There are three aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building:
  - a. Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
  - b. Quality of illumination on building exterior
  - c. Interior lighting as seen from the exterior.
2. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
8. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
  - a. Reproductions of original or later contributing fixtures, based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - b. Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - c. Reproductions of original or later contributing fixtures, based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - d. Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
  - e. New lighting fixtures which are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
  - f. The new exterior lighting location shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.
9. Interior lighting shall only be reviewed when its character has a significant effect on the exterior of the building; that is, when the view of the illuminated fixtures themselves, or the quality and color of the light they produce, is clearly visible through the exterior fenestration.
10. No exposed conduit shall be allowed.
11. As a Landmark, architectural night lighting is encouraged, provided the lighting installations minimize night sky light pollution. High efficiency fixtures, lamps and automatic timers are recommended.
12. On-site mock-ups of proposed architectural night lighting may be required.

## 9.12 Accessibility

**Refer to Sections 9.2 A, B, C, and D regarding treatment of materials. Refer to Sections 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.11, 9.13 and Sections 10, 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character defining features of the property. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.
2. Because of the complex nature of accessibility the commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis.
3. It is recommended that applicants consult with staff of the Commission as early in the process as possible when proposing alterations for the purposes of accessibility.
4. Where feasible and appropriate, reversible solutions to providing accessibility are encouraged.

## 9.13 Additions

**Refer to Sections 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9 and Sections 10, 10.2, 10.8 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the buildings and character of the site. Therefore, an exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space or program requirements.
2. New additions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. Additions to the Original Mother Church and Extension are strongly discouraged.
4. New additions shall be designed so that the character defining features of the building and site are not substantially altered, obscured, damaged or destroyed.

5. New additions should be designed so that they are differentiated from the existing building, thus, they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
6. New additions shall be of a size, scale, and of materials and details that are in harmony with the historic buildings and site.
7. New additions should not be located on a primary façade, and additional stories should be set back or be separated from the primary façade such that significant character-defining features of the original building façades are not compromised.

#### **9.14 New Construction**

**Refer to Section 9.1 and Section 10.0 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Except as noted below, no new construction shall be allowed within the significant open spaces of the site as defined as the Plaza landscape in Section 2.2, Physical Description. *“The Plaza landscape, located around and between the main buildings, including the Huntington Avenue plaza, the Massachusetts Avenue lawn and plaza, and a passageway between The Mother Church and the Publishing House. Primary design elements are the Reflecting Pool and Children’s Fountain, an entrance to the underground garage, circulation areas, planting beds, and benches.”*
2. New construction may be considered along the Huntington Avenue edge of the complex so long as the new construction does not demolish or otherwise compromise the integrity of significant buildings, open space, or features.
3. Proposals for new construction, where allowed, shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the buildings and site.
4. New construction proposals will be reviewed by the Commission for appropriateness of location, massing (including height and associated impacts), architectural design, site design, details, and materials.
5. When considering new construction proposals, the Commission will consider other relevant master plans, zoning requirements, projected public improvements and existing and proposed renewal and development plans applicable to the site.

6. When considering proposals that require review by other city, state and federal agencies, the Commission will coordinate a concurrent review process to the extent possible.

### **9.15 Archaeology**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D regarding treatment of materials. Refer to Section 10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Disturbance of the terrain around the building or site shall be kept to a minimum so as not to disturb any unknown archaeological materials
2. An archaeological assessment should be conducted to determine the archaeological sensitivity of any new building site. Should the assessment recommend further study, then an archaeological survey should be conducted prior to the beginning of any new construction project.
3. Known archaeological sites shall be protected during any construction project.
4. All planning, any necessary site investigation, or data recovery shall be conducted by a professional archaeologist.

## **10.0 SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA – LANDSCAPE: SITE DESIGN/PLAZAS/LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

### **10.1 Introduction**

1. The Christian Science Center complex is a renowned work of architecture and landscape design, comprising individually distinctive elements that reflect the evolution of the complex from 1894-1975, that together form a cohesive whole. These Standards and Criteria should be applied with an understanding of the history and significance of the Christian Science Center complex, as described in the full Study Report, Sections 1.0 – 7.0.
2. In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural and landscape elements.
3. Conformance to these Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are they absolute. The Commission has the authority to issue Certificates of Design Approval for projects that vary from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing(s), in accordance with Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.
4. These Standards and Criteria included in this report are not intended to interfere with the free exercise of religion. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes the unique circumstances when applying architectural guidelines to religious properties and will respect the protection provided such institutions under the U.S. and Massachusetts constitutions as well as applicable statutory safeguards.
5. The intent of these Standards and Criteria is to preserve the overall character and appearance of the Christian Science Center Complex (site), including its spatial organization, circulation, features, topography, and vegetation.
6. Demolition of structures or features within the Christian Science Church complex is prohibited.
7. The standards and criteria acknowledge that there will be changes to the site and are intended to make the changes sensitive to the historic character of the site.

8. Any proposal to remove later additions or alterations will be studied to determine if such later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed.
9. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors that will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:
  - a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
  - b. Historic association with the property.
  - c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
  - d. Functional usefulness.
10. Recreational facilities which exist should be allowed to remain as long as they serve substantial community functions. Any future redesign efforts of these features should be compatible with the overall design.
11. Additions to existing recreational facilities shall not be allowed unless such additions make the facilities more compatible with the overall site design.
12. The development of additional facilities for active recreation or single purpose uses for limited user groups shall not be allowed.
13. Proposals for special activities and events which cause significant impacts shall not be permitted. Temporary or seasonal structures may be considered, but require review and approval by the Commission and will be limited to a defined period of installation.
14. The Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that any/all work proposed to the site be executed with the guidance of a landscape professional with expertise with historic landscapes.
15. The Commission will consider in its review proposals described in the Church's 2010 Plaza Revitalization Project document (submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority). However, proposed changes to the complex are neither precluded nor implicitly approved by such consideration. For reference, see Section 5.2 – Current Planning Issues.
16. The Christian Science Center complex is subject to the terms of the design guidelines herein stated. Please also refer to the Specific Standards and Criteria – Exteriors, Section 9.0, and the General Standards and Criteria, Section 8.0.
17. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following:



## **10.2 Spatial Organization (Includes Views, Vistas, Open Spaces, Plazas, etc.)**

**Refer to Sections 9.13, 9.14 and Sections 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. Views and vistas are among the most important aspects of the site, therefore, they should be maintained and preserved.
2. All original and later contributing views and vistas shall be preserved.
3. Original or later contributing spatial organizational features shall be retained in their existing configuration.
4. Alteration of existing or addition of new spatial organizational features will be considered if they do not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
5. Deteriorated or missing spatial organizational features shall be replaced with features that match the original in form, shape, color, and texture.
6. When replacement of features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
8. Important visual connections between spaces within the site shall be retained by maintaining circulation, plazas, and vegetation features which contribute to these visual relationships.
9. The historic spatial and functional relationship of circulation systems, water features, and structures shall be preserved by maintaining the massing of adjacent vegetation, vistas, or other associated features. The balance between the existing hardscape and vegetation features should be maintained.
10. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions of vegetation materials and features should consider maintaining existing or intended vistas and spaces, screening of intrusions, creating new spaces where appropriate, and maintaining defined areas of shade and sun.
11. The form and shape of individual spaces and their associated vertical and/or horizontal elements should be retained in order to preserve the historic relationships of the site. Examples include the relationship

between open spaces and planting features or the width and length of an allée as it relates to edge conditions or adjacent buildings.

12. Moving or demolishing historic structures that would alter spatial and visual relationships of the site design shall not be allowed.
13. Construction of new structures or additions to structures that would alter historic spatial and visual relationships in the landscape shall not be allowed.
14. Intrusive views or new construction, where allowed, may be screened with compatible screen elements or plant material so long as the screening does not detract from the historic character of the site.

**10.3 Topography**  
**(Includes the Shape, Slope, Elevation, Contour of Landforms and Ground Plane, etc.)**

**Refer to Section 9.15 and Sections 10.2, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, and 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. As an urban landscape, the Christian Science Center Complex is a primarily flat site with no original natural landforms or features, however, the following topography guidelines apply:
  - a. All original or later contributing topography shall be preserved.
  - b. Original or later contributing topographical features, such as lawn panels, shall be retained in their existing configuration and shall be maintained through proper drainage, access and erosion control, and recognized soil management practices.
  - c. Alteration of existing or addition of new topographical features will be considered if they do not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
  - d. When replacement of materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - e. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

**10.4 Vegetation**  
**(Includes Trees, Shrubs, Lawns, Ground Covers, Hedges, Allees, Planting Beds, etc.)**

**Refer to Section 9.15 and Sections 10.2, 10.3, 10.5, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9 and 10.10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing vegetation shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing vegetation materials and features shall be retained in their existing configuration and shall be maintained through proper horticultural management practices.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new vegetation materials and features will be considered if they do not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
4. Deteriorated or missing vegetation materials and features shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, form, and texture.
5. When replacement of vegetation materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
6. If using the same vegetation material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute vegetation materials may be considered if they convey the same growth habit, form, foliage, and bloom characteristics as the historic plant.
7. Existing healthy vegetation material shall be retained unless it is part of a later non-compatible design or is volunteer or invasive vegetation inconsistent with the original design.
8. Consideration for removal of existing healthy vegetation materials and features will be given when it is in conflict with the original design intent of the site, such as when an important vista has become overgrown or when plants have grown out of scale with their intended purpose.
9. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions of vegetation materials and features should consider maintaining existing or intended vistas and spaces, screening of intrusions, creating new spaces where appropriate, and maintaining defined areas of shade and sun.
10. Invasive vegetation shall be removed whenever technically feasible and shall be replaced with appropriate vegetation consistent with the original

design of the site and with current factors such as security, ecological conditions, and wildlife management practices.

11. Hazardous plants or portions of plants should be removed promptly.
12. Plants with diseases that are difficult or not practical to control or cure should be removed promptly to prevent the infection of other plants.
13. Mutilated or distorted plants should be removed.
14. Plant replacements should be added on a schedule that will assure continuity in the site design.
15. Existing vegetation shall be protected from adjacent construction activities by fencing the root system prior to the start of construction.

#### **10.5 Circulation (Includes Roads, Paths, Plazas, Walks, etc.)**

**Refer to Section 9.15 and Sections 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 10.8, and 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing circulation shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing layouts of walks, roads, plazas, walks, and paved areas shall be retained and maintained.
3. Alteration of existing or addition of new circulation layouts will be considered if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alteration does not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
4. When replacement of circulation layouts is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Original or later contributing circulation materials and features shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, or reinforcing the material or feature using recognized preservation methods.
6. Deteriorated or missing circulation materials and features shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, profile, form, texture, and detail of installation.
7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

8. Alteration of existing or addition of new circulation materials and features will be considered if they do not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
9. Consideration will be given to an alternate paving material if it can be shown that its properties will improve the original or later contributing design concept.
10. When replacement of circulation materials or features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
11. Consideration for removal of existing circulation systems and features will be given when it is in conflict with the original design intent of the site or when they are no longer appropriate to their intended purpose.

**10.6 Water Features  
(Includes Fountains, Pools, Irrigation Systems, etc.)**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D and Sections 10.10 regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.7, 10.8 and 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing water features shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing water features shall be retained and maintained.
3. Existing water features should not be altered. Consideration will be given to proposals that improve site drainage, improve water quality, improve water management, or enhance the site design.
4. Alteration of existing or addition of new water features will be considered if the alteration does not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
5. When replacement of water features and their materials are necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
6. Original or later contributing water feature materials shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or reinforcing the material using recognized preservation methods.
7. Deteriorated or missing water feature materials shall be replaced with materials that match the original in size, shape, color, profile, form, texture, and detail of installation.

8. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
9. Alteration of existing or addition of new water feature materials will be considered if they do not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
10. Consideration for removal of existing water features will be given only if they are in conflict with the original design intent of the site or when they are no longer appropriate to their intended purpose.

**10.7 Furnishings and Objects**  
**(Includes Benches, Lights, Signs, Fences, Tree Grates, Flagpoles, Sculpture, Monuments, Memorials, Planters, Urns, Drinking Fountains, Trash Receptacles, etc.)**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D and Sections 10.10 regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.8, and 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. All original or later contributing furnishings and objects, including original cluster light fixtures, shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing furnishings and objects materials, elements, features and details shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing materials, elements, features, and details of furnishings and objects shall be replaced with materials that match the original in material, size, shape, color, profile, form, texture, configuration, design intent, and detail of installation.
4. Alteration of existing or addition of new furnishings and objects will be considered if the alteration does not alter the basic concept of the historic site design.
5. Lighting design should not detract from or be intrusive of the original site light fixtures in design, character, and location.
6. When replacement of furnishings and objects and their materials are necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

8. Existing memorials, statues, monuments, and fountains shall be carefully preserved and restored where necessary, maintaining the integrity of the original material and design. This work shall be coordinated with the Boston Art Commission, as necessary.
9. New furnishings and objects should be designed using vandal resistant standards.
10. Location of site signage shall be guided by a master plan and shall conform to a simple sign system. See Section 9.10
11. Existing non-conforming signs should be removed.

## **10.8 Structures**

**(Includes Walls, Terraces, Arbors, Gazebos, Follies, Playground Equipment, Plazas, Steps, etc.)**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D and Sections 10.10 regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.15 and Sections 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.9 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

1. The general intent is to preserve the original or later contributing structures that enhance the historic site.
2. All original or later contributing structures shall be preserved.
3. Original or later contributing structures, materials, elements, details and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.
4. Deteriorated or missing structures, materials, elements, details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation.
5. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
7. New additions/alterations to the site, where allowed, shall be as unobtrusive as possible and preserve any original or later contributing site features.



8. Removal of non-contributing structures from the existing site is encouraged.

#### **10.9 Site Accessibility**

**Refer to Section 9.12 for Accessibility Standards and Criteria. Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D and Sections 10.10 regarding treatment of materials. Refer to Sections 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.**

#### **10.10 Architectural Materials**

**Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D regarding treatment of materials.**

#### **11.0 Severability**

The provisions of these Standards and Criteria (Design Guidelines) are severable and if any of their provisions shall be held invalid in any circumstances, such invalidity shall not affect any other provisions or circumstances.

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### **Personal Communications**

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