

Boston Young Men's Christian Union Building

Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report



Report of the Boston Landmarks Commission
on the Potential Designation of
THE BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN UNION
as a Landmark
Under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975

REVISED 11/30/77

Approved: Mauro Myers Oct 27, 1977
(Exec. Director) (Date)

Approved: Pauline Chase Harrell 10/27/77
(Chairman) (Date)

YMCO

REVISIONS TO THE STUDY REPORT

Adopted Nov. 30, 1977

- 1) Section 4.2 should read as follows: The future of the building(s) could be uncertain due to the suggested location of new office space on the block bounded by Boylston, Tremont, Stuart, and Washington Streets. The Boston Redevelopment Authority is currently engaged in a planning study which will form the basis for final recommendations for the area. (For a more detailed discussion of same, see Section 5.2.)

- 2) Section 5.2 Page 2, paragraph 4, line 5: 'veterinary clinic' should be 'nutritional center'.
Page 2, paragraph 2, line 4: 'Bedford' should be 'Avon'
Page 2, paragraph 4, line 3: 'Federal' should be 'government'

- 3) Location Map (corrected as indicated)

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1.0 LOCATION OF THE PROPERTY

1.1 Address: 48 Boylston Street, Ward 3, Central Boston
Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 4893

1.2 Area in Which the Property is Located:

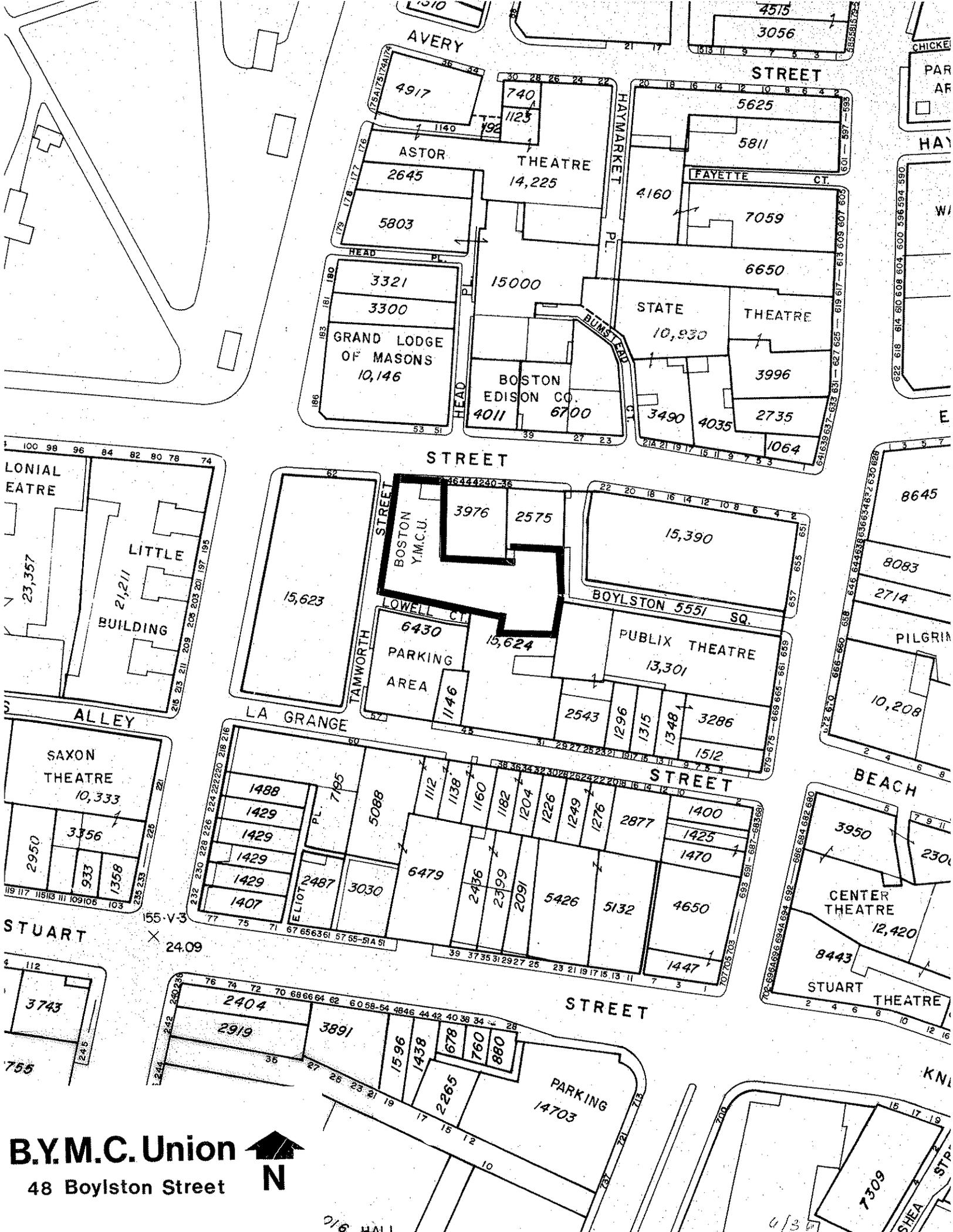
The building is located on Boylston Street at the corner of Tamworth, between Tremont and Washington Streets, in the entertainment district. The immediate area is serviced by the Boylston Street Station of the MBTA Green Line and the Essex Station of the Orange Line, and is bordered by the Common and Park Square on the west, the Theatre District and Tufts-New England Medical Center on the south, the Adult Entertainment District and the Garment District on the east, and the downtown shopping district on the north.

The area is characterized by a heterogenous mix of mostly late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings varying in height from 2 to 10 stories and interspersed with a few parking lots. Uses vary from a predominance of retail and entertainment activities on the street-level, to office, light manufacturing, and residential uses above the first floor.

1.3 Map Showing Location: attached



B.Y.M.C. Union 
48 Boylston Street **N**



B.Y.M.C. Union 
 48 Boylston Street **N**

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use:

The building is a five-story institutional structure which conforms to the lot lines of its irregular L-shaped parcel. It still serves as a meeting hall, library, theatre, and sports facility for the young men's service organization which built it slightly over a century ago. The ground floor storefront, which originally served as a bank branch office, is now used by the Y.M.C.U.

2.2 Physical Description:

The Boston Young Men's Christian Union Building is a five-story, L-shaped institutional structure designed by Nathanael J. Bradlee in the High Victorian Gothic style, and constructed of load-bearing masonry walls on a granite block foundation set into solid earth, with an ornate buff sandstone street facade. This facade is divided into two parts; the main, three-bay facade mass with a ground floor storefront, and a side clock tower (now truncated at the building's cornice line) projecting slightly forward from the facade plane, with the building's main entrance on its street floor.

The main entranceway, raised four steps from the street and recessed, has chamfered edges, molded corner brackets, and a ballflower molding on its top edge. Above this is a panel with carved stone lettering identifying the Union, and the entire opening is framed by high, panelled pedestals with carved capitals that serve as consoles for paired colonettes with crocket capitals which in turn support a foliate-carved entablature with a small triangular pediment at either end. These pediments, which have leafage carving in their tympana, are united by a decorative cast-iron railing that has the effect of a balcony for the heavily emphasized second floor window opening. This window is flanked by colonettes supporting flat stone voussoirs in a Tudor arch shape, with a heavy hood-mold defining the extrados and leafage-carved impost moldings that serve as a belt course, running to the ends of the bay. This arch is capped by a gable molding with crockets and label stops, which has geometric patterned terra-cotta tiles and a circular medallion in its tympanum. Relief-carved heads project from square panels on either side of the window. The facade treatment of these first two tower floors is designed to make them function as a unit.

The third floor tower window is composed of a recessed rectangular window sash set into a pointed-arch opening with a carved trefoil in the tympanum. The arch has a molded extrados and is supported on colonettes with crocket capitals. The fourth floor divides into a pair of rectangular window openings with sawtooth-carved lintels which share the middle of three flanking colonettes. Above these is a panel of geometric patterned terra-cotta tiles, which are topped by a prominent molded string course. Set atop this molding are the three fifth-story lancet windows, which are joined by paired colonettes and have simple medallions in their tympana. The tower facade originally continued up to a stone ballustrade below a

large round clock framed by a pointed extrado molding. The tower was capped with a high peaked slate roof with a spire or pinnacle at its peak.

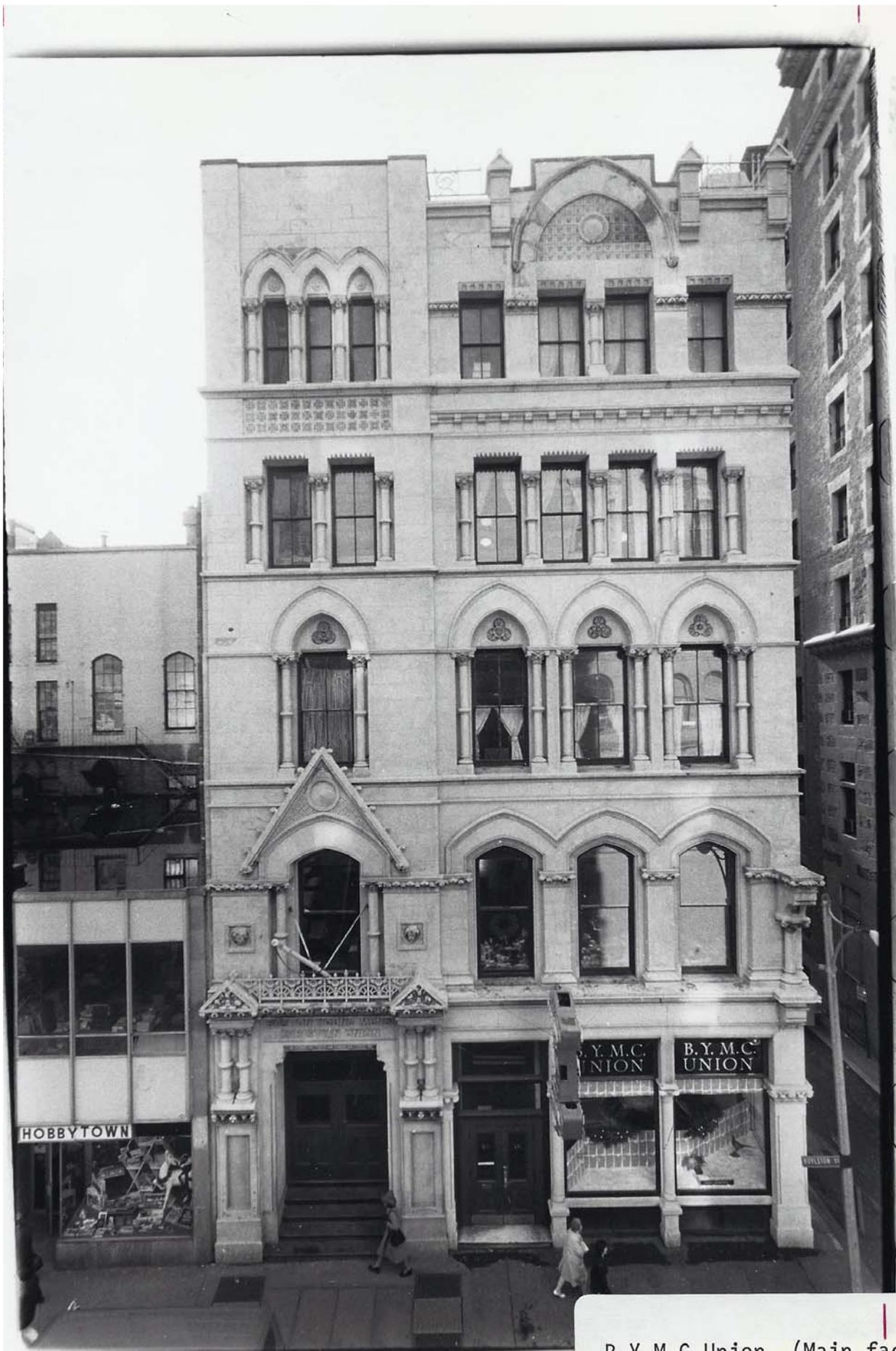
The main building facade's ground floor storefront is divided into three rectangular bays separated by engaged columns with crocket capitals. The bay closest to the tower contains a street-level entrance composed of two oak paneled doors with a transom above. Two large plate glass windows with transoms bearing signs identifying the Union fill the two window bays, and the building's corner.

The second floor facade is composed of three windows centered over the storefront bays below. These tudor-arched windows reflect their more ornate counterpart on the tower facade, and are joined by a connecting extrados molding and separated by flat piers whose capitals are formed by the carved impost molding/belt course. On the west end of the facade, a large console bracket supported on a colonette was originally designed to support a small signboard.

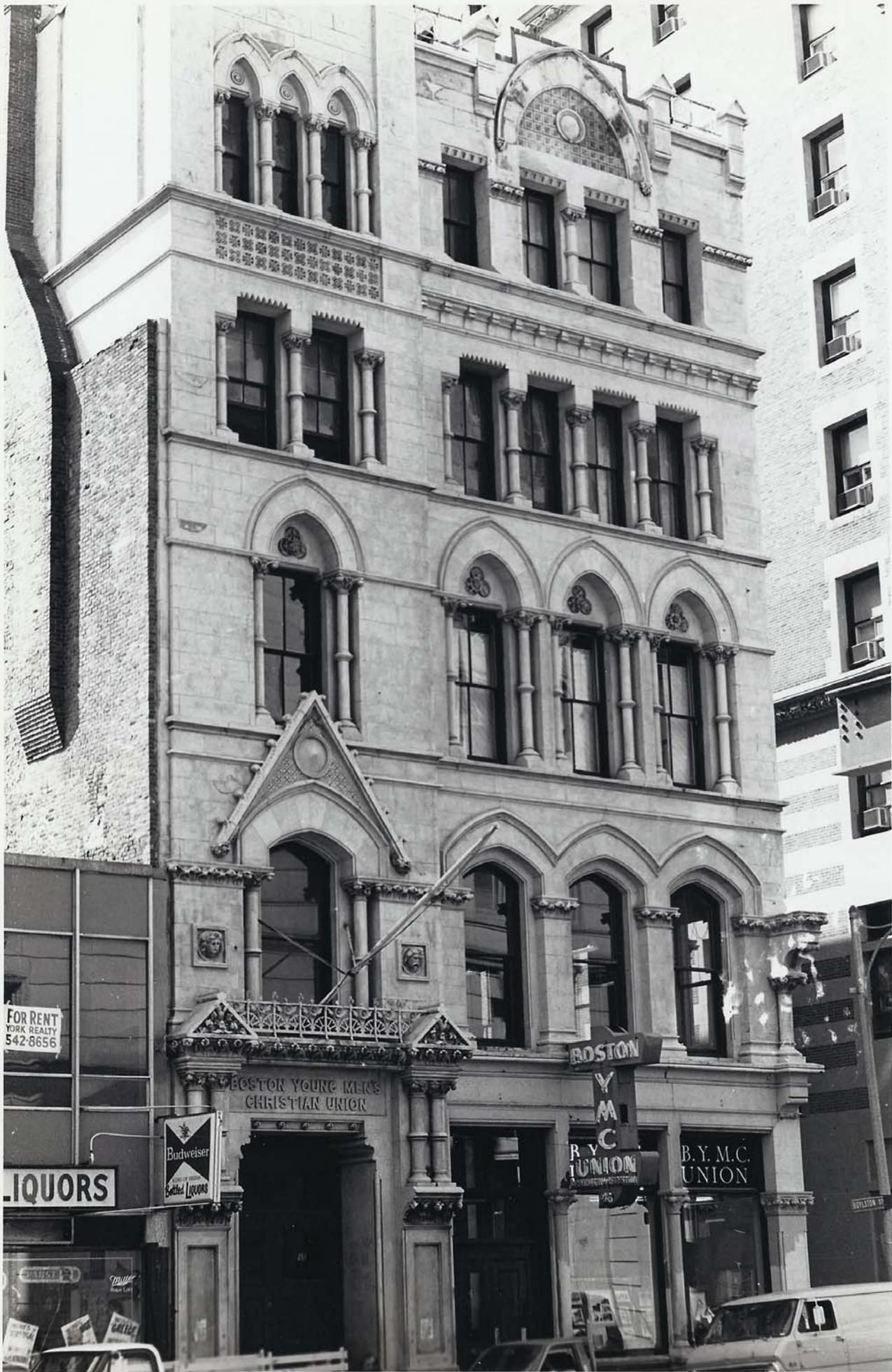
The third and fourth floor facades contain windows identical to those on the corresponding tower floors; the unit is repeated three times on the third floor, and four times on the fourth. The top story varies in its window treatment, having four irregularly spaced rectangular windows united by a carved impost molding. The two central windows share a supporting colonette and are capped by a broad molding with label stops forming the extrados of a blind arch whose tympanum is filled with geometric tiles and a central medallion. This arch projects slightly above the cornice line, and is flanked by small parapets. An original facade gable with crockets, similar to that on the second floor tower facade, originally sat on top of this arch, and was removed when the tower was truncated.

The sandstone facade dressing continues for the first two bays of the building's west elevation, along Tamworth street. The remainder of the building is of red face brick with plain stone window lintels, and has a minimum of stylistic elaboration.

2.3 Photographs: attached



B.Y.M.C. Union (Main facade)
Photo by Steven M. Stone, 1976



B. Y. M. C. UNION (Main facade)

I.L.C. Photo by Robert P. Burke
October, 1977

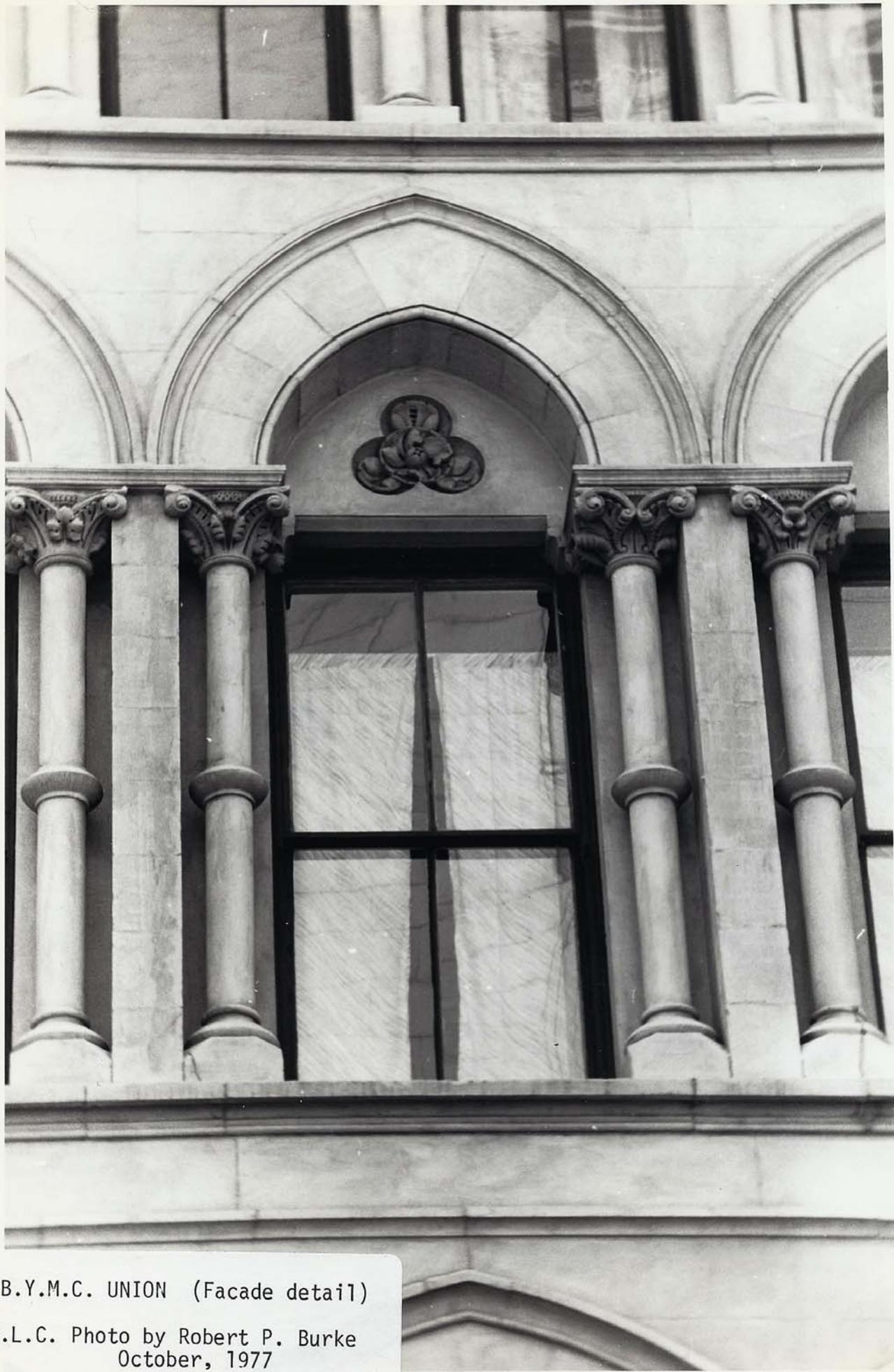


ION (Main Entrance
detail)
Robert P. Burke
1977

BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S
CHRISTIAN UNION

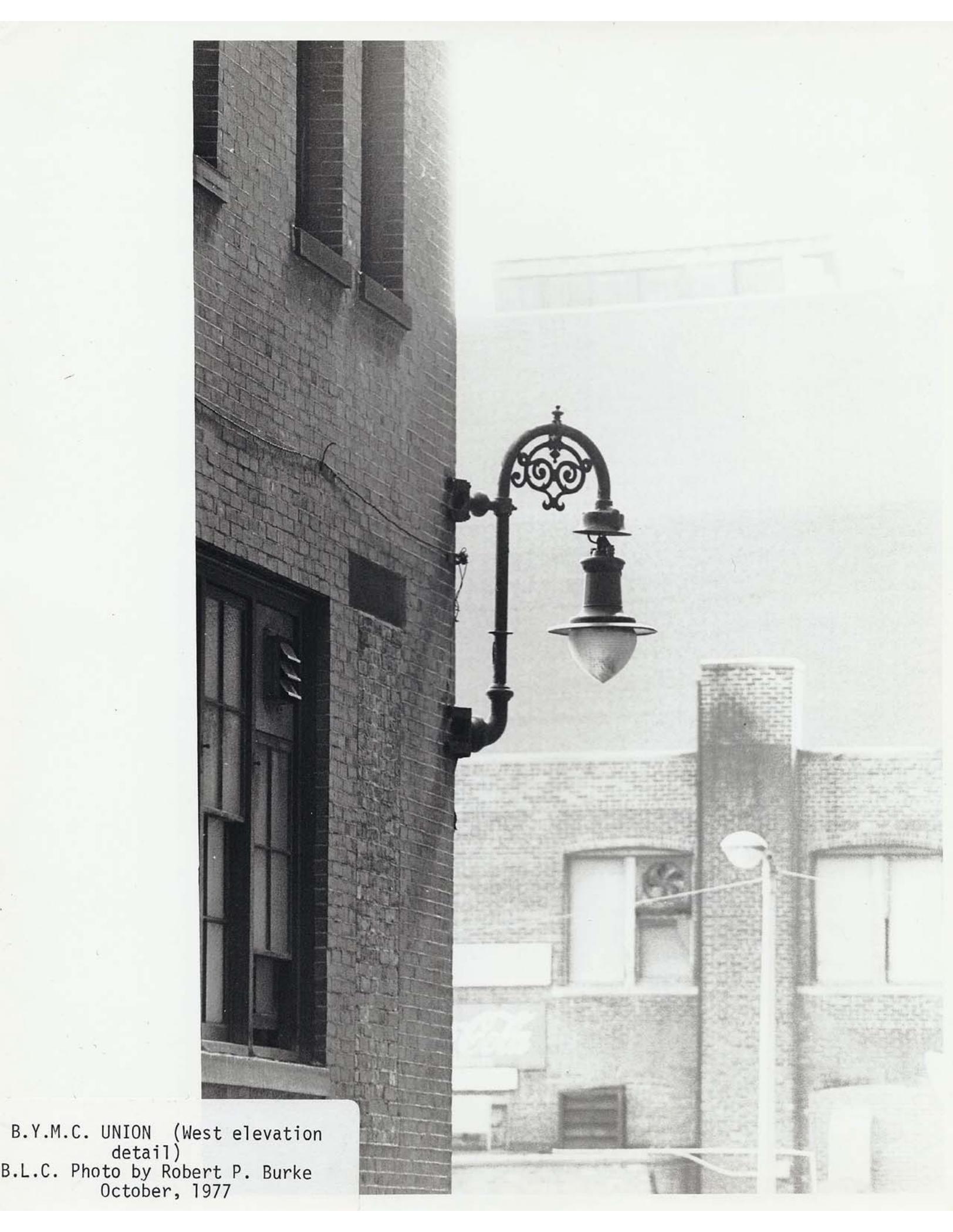
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B.Y.M.C. UN
B.L.C. Photo
October



B.Y.M.C. UNION (Facade detail)

B.L.C. Photo by Robert P. Burke
October, 1977



B.Y.M.C. UNION (West elevation
detail)
B.L.C. Photo by Robert P. Burke
October, 1977

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Historic Associations:

The Boston Young Men's Christian Union is important to the history of Boston as a private institution which has served a viable social function in central Boston for 150 years, occupying its present building since its construction in 1875.

The Union was founded in 1851 by a group of Harvard students as a biblical and christian literature discussion group, which incorporated as the B.Y.M.C.U. the following year. First located on School Street, the organization's activities were directed toward "the Young Man, who, upon the threshold of an active business life, needs Christian fellowship, and the friendly counsel of the experienced". (B.Y.M.C.U. First Annual Report, 1852). In addition to providing a focal point for the intellectual, religious, and social life of primarily middle-class, well-educated urban youths, the Union played a very important role as a kind of urban induction center for the large numbers of young men in pursuit of careers who flocked to the cities during the period of urban expansion in the second half of the 19th century.

The Union's services seem to have been so much in demand that it was forced to occupy five successively larger locations until it decided to build its own building in 1873. Solicitations for public support for this venture were successful enough that the \$270,000 required for site acquisition and construction was easily raised--apparently largely through private donations by prominent figures, many of who were acquainted with or were themselves Union members. The Union's philanthropic origins were perhaps also responsible for a number of substantial donations by old Boston families.

The building's present site was chosen for its "nearness to the Common...(and) its central location near the dividing line between the north and south sections of the city". (Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 21, 1874) The architectural firm of Bradlee and Winslow was hired to design the structure, principally because Nathaniel J. Bradlee, by then a prominent architect and public figure, was also a life member of the Union and the brother of one of its founders.

The resulting building contained retail space on the ground floor (in order to take advantage of the building's prominent location), and an auditorium, gymnasium, library, social and game rooms, and offices for the Union. Since the original building's completion, three separate additions (the most recent in 1956) have complemented the Union's facilities, with the result that it has continued to the present day to serve as an active social and athletic facility for men from a wide variety of backgrounds and of all ages. The Union currently operates chess, camera, wrestling, and barbell clubs, and has facilities for swimming, basketball, hanball, squash, and billiards. It also operates a summer camp for children

in New Hampshire, and donates space for two social service programs, a mental health day care facility and a citizen training program for juvenile offenders on probation.

3.2 Architectural Significance:

The Boston Young Men's Christian Union Building is architecturally significant as a notable example of the High Victorian Gothic style in Boston, designed by a prominent Boston architect. Its importance, particularly to local architectural history, is underscored by the fact that it is the most accomplished building in the High Victorian Gothic idiom remaining in the Central Business District.

The High Victorian Gothic style (sometimes called "Ruskinian Gothic", after its chief apologist), first gained currency in England, where it was popular in the 1850's and 1860's. The style reached America at about the time of the Civil War, reaching its zenith in the late 1870's. Derived from a mixture of English, Italian, French, and some German Gothic precedents, the style emphasized complicated, asymmetrical massing, polychromy, and textural contrast provided the variations in color and texture were intrinsic to the materials used, and not applied 'artificially' to them. Hence, practitioners of the style conceived a taste for mixing and contrasting varying colors of brick, terra-cotta, slate, and different stones to create a variegated effect. Among the style's most renowned practitioners were Philadelphia's Frank Furness, the firm of Ware and VanBrunt (designers of Harvard's Memorial Hall, which Whiffen has termed one of the style's "major monuments"), and Sturgis and Brigham, who designed the old Venetian Gothic Museum of Fine Arts (which stood on the site of the present Copley Plaza Hotel) in 1876-8.

Nathaniel Jeremiah Bradlee (1829-1888), the architect of the Union, studied under George Dexter and was active on his own and with his partner (and eventual successor) Walter Winslow between 1853 and his death. A founder of the Boston Society of Architects and active in many civic groups, Bradlee designed numerous downtown/commercial buildings (such as the New England Mutual Building which stood in Post Office Square), and the oldest section of the recently demolished Jordan Marsh Store, railroad depots (most notably the old Boston and Maine station in Haymarket Square), and churches (few of which survive) as well as numerous South End residential blocks and individual Back Bay houses. He achieved his greatest notoriety for his direction of the moving of the Hotel Pelham, formerly at the corner of Boylston and Tremont streets, for the widening of Tremont street in 1869.

Bradlee's design for the Union employs the High Victorian Gothic mode, perhaps because it was one he was familiar with and practiced in, or perhaps because its ecclesiastical overtones seemed to befit the image of a Christian service, fellowship-oriented institution. In any case, the architect's design makes use of many of the stylistic features favored by the style to create a richly

patterned facade whose textural effect is heightened by its conspicuous lack of polychromy. The building's massing, though relatively simple (probably due to the constraints of the site) is still characteristic of the style, with a tall, asymmetrical tower offset by a lower, wider main facade. Though the top portion of this tower was removed in 1927, the facade as a whole (which has been cleaned, repointed, and waterproofed and is maintained in excellent condition) continues to be visually entertaining from the street level.

The Union was originally designed as an ensemble with the 1867 Masonic Temple building across Boylston Street, and the Boylston Hotel, adjacent to the Union along Boylston both of which were in the High Victorian Gothic style, and neither of which survived. Of the many structures built in this style in the commercial district, particularly after the Fire of 1872, in fact only a dozen survive, and of these the Union is both the largest and most accomplished, and one of the very few built to serve non-commercial uses.

3.3 Relationship to the Criteria for Landmark Designation:

The Boston Young Men's Christian Union clearly meets the criteria for Landmark designation, as established by Chapter 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, in that it is a structure which is identified with an important aspect of the social history of the city, which embodies distinctive characteristics of an architectural style that is inherently valuable for study, and as a notable work of an architect whose work influenced the development of the city.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value and Property Tax:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Land | \$485,000.00 |
| Improvements | \$291,300.00 |
| Total | \$776,300.00 |

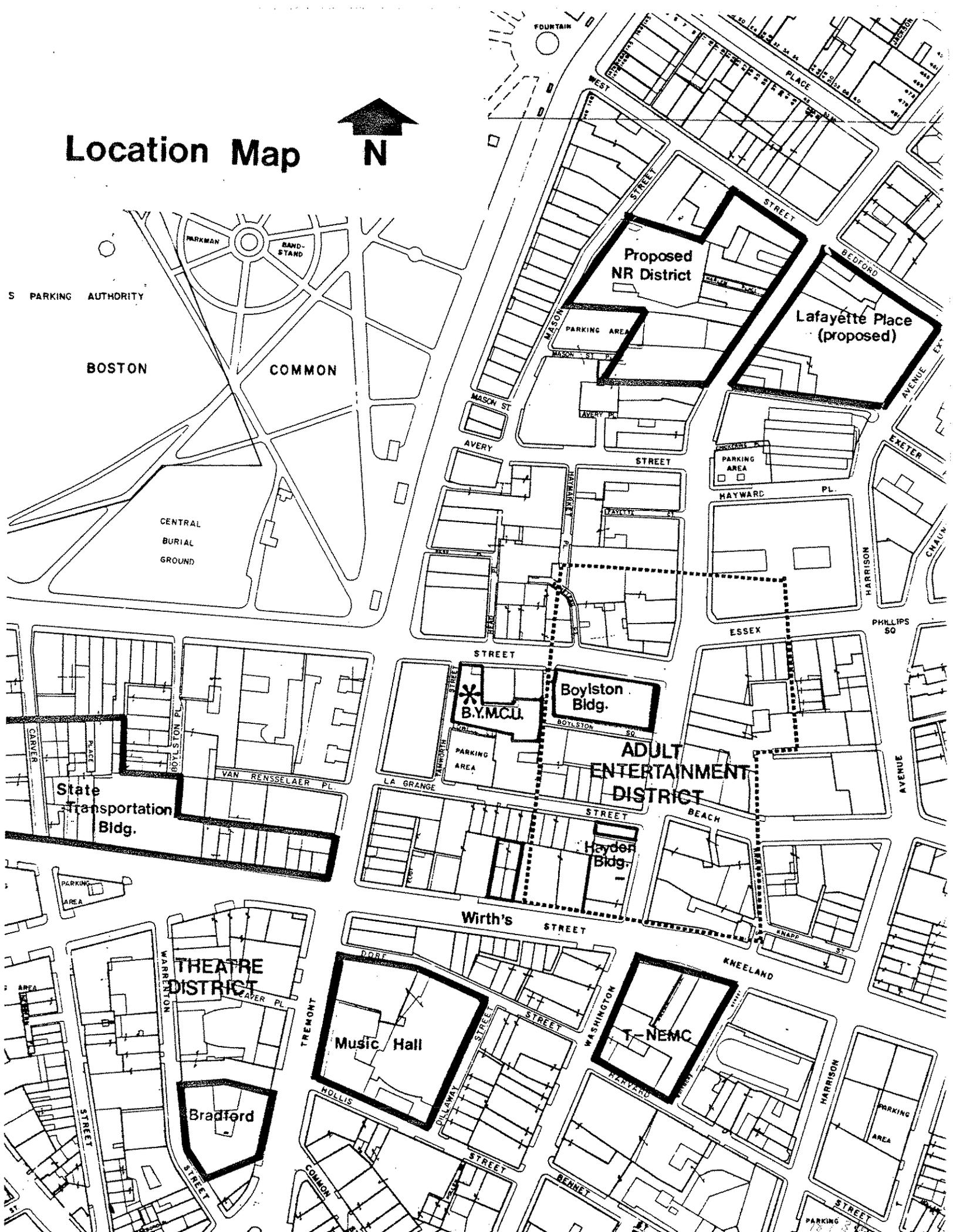
Annual Taxes: The Property is tax-exempt under Chapter 59, Section 5 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth, as a private, non-profit institution. Taxes, at the current rate of \$252.90 per \$1,000.00 of assessed valuation, would be \$196,326.27 per year.

4.2 Current Ownership and Status:

The building is currently owned by the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, the men's service organization which built it in 1875. The building is kept in good repair by the Union, and (due partially to a series of additions to the main building) still serves the Union's needs adequately.

Nevertheless, the future of the building is uncertain, due to the suggested location of new office construction on the block on which the building now stands. However, plans for the area are not final and are currently under review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. (For a more detailed discussion, see section 5.3).

Location Map



PARKING AUTHORITY

BOSTON

COMMON

CENTRAL
BURIAL
GROUND

State
Transportation
Bldg.

THEATRE
DISTRICT

Bradford

B.Y.M.C.U.

Boylston
Bldg.

ADULT
ENTERTAINMENT
DISTRICT

Hayden
Bldg.

Wirth's

Music Hall

T-NEMC

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background:

Originally comprising the narrowing edge of the Shawmut Peninsula leading out towards the neck, the somewhat marshy land between the bottom edge of the Common and the Back Bay, (the area which surrounds the present-day B.Y.M.C.U.), was sparsely settled and somewhat rural throughout most of the 18th century. Frog Lane (now Boylston street) was the only public way in the area, and the only nearby sites of any importance in the 18th century town were the Common Burying Ground, set up in 1754 and first called the South Burying Ground, and the Hollis Street Meeting House, built in 1732.

The first indication of the area's increasing commercial importance due to its location along the neck, was the location of the Bulfinch-designed Boylston Market, a public market and meeting hall, on the corner of Boylston and Washington streets in 1810. The construction of a series of Boston & Providence Railroad terminals in Park Square between 1835 and 1900 further increased traffic in the area, which by mid-century had begun to become built up with large residential, commercial, and institutional structures such as the first Boston Public Library (1855), the Hotel Pelham (Boston's first 'French Flat') in 1857, and the Masonic Temple in 1864.

While the edges of the Common became lined with such architectural showpieces as these, the streets immediately in back and to the east of it took on a different character. The expansion and displacement of the commercial district following the Fire of 1872 forced a southward shift in the more marginal wholesale and light industrial uses such as sweatshops, shoe stitcheries, and wholesale clothing stores. Many of these moved to the upper floors of buildings along and near lower Washington street forming the present-day Garment District.

Concurrent with the removal of the Boston & Providence Railroad terminal to South Station in 1900, the area south of the Common began to develop as a theatre district. The third building of the Hollis street Meeting House had been converted to a theater in 1885; this was followed by the construction of the Tremont theatre in 1889, the Colonial in 1900, the Majestic in 1903, the Shubert in 1910, and the Wilbur in 1914. The area has continued throughout the century to be characterized by a mix of small-scale retail and entertainment uses on the street level, with office, residential, wholesale, and light manufacturing uses above a diversity of uses which has its origins in the somewhat haphazard growth of the 19th century commercial metropolis.

To this mix has recently been added an influx of adult entertainment establishments since the razing of Scollay Square in the early 1960's. In an attempt to restrict the spread and upgrade the

quality of these uses, the City of Boston enacted a special Zoning Code amendment which allowed X-rated adult entertainment uses only within the special zone located along the two blocks of Washington street between Boylston/Essex and Stuart. The B.Y.M.C.U. is about one half block west of the district's edge.

5.2 Current Planning Issues:

Much of the area surrounding the B.Y.M.C. Union (see map) has been declining economically since the late 1960's, due largely to the blighting influence of nearby adult entertainment uses. Therefore, current planning efforts in the area involve the coordination of a number of planned and proposed development projects and the encouraging of additional new investment, in order to reverse the area's recent decline. Major planning issues in the area therefore relate to the desired location, scale, and uses of new development, and the manner in which this development is integrated with the area's existing uses and structures.

Two planned developments most certain to have an impact on the area's traffic volume and land values are the State Transportation Building, scheduled for completion by 1980 as an element in the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Project, and the privately sponsored renovation of the Tufts-owned Music Hall. The State Transportation Building, an L-shaped, mid-rise office building with a walk-through street level shopping arcade with enclosed parking for 400 cars, will occupy a site fronting on the new line of Charles Street, and along Stuart Street to the corner of Tremont. In conjunction with this, a number of public and pedestrian improvements are planned, including the straightening of Charles and Stuart Streets, and a walk-through pedestrian artery running from Boylston Street down Boylston Place into Warrenton Street, connecting to Eliot Norton Park.

The Music Hall, built in 1925 as a lavish "movie palace" and currently the host of events ranging from rock concerts to Tchaikovski's "Nutcracker Suite", is in line for a \$3.5 million renovation of its interior, including the stage and dressing rooms. Located on Tremont Street just below Stuart, the Music Hall's regeneration is seen as an important catalyst for the renewed vitality of the Theatre District as a whole.

Two other nearby development projects are being considered by the Tufts-New England Medical Center. The first is the construction of elderly housing under the H.U.D. Section 8 subsidy program, perhaps by means of rehabilitating the Tufts-owned Bradford Hotel. Tufts is also considering the addition of a pediatric clinic and veterinary school to its complex, using air-rights over Washington Street. If completed, this could expand the market for middle-income residential space in the immediate area.

Two major development projects, both still in the proposal stage, whose impact on the area is difficult to assess are the remainder of the Park Plaza Project, and Lafayette Place. The revised

version of the Park Plaza Project which is currently awaiting City Council approval calls for a mixture of mid- and high-rise hotel, apartment, office, and retail construction covering roughly the area bounded by Arlington, Boylston, Tremont, and Stuart Streets (excepting the so-called Piano Row buildings along Boylston). This would, if built, act to upgrade and stabilize a long-declining area on the fringe of the downtown, as well as to increase development pressure and traffic in areas adjacent to it. In the meanwhile, the uncertainty surrounding the project is prompting property owners in the proposed project area to defer investment decisions pending the project's outcome--resulting in the area's accelerated decline.

The proposed Lafayette Place project, jointly sponsored by the French firm of Sefrius, Inc. and Allied Stores, currently envisions a hotel/ retail complex on the already-cleared site bounded by Washington, Chauncy, Bedford, and Hayward Streets. If built, it would serve as a major element in the Boston Redevelopment Authority's shopping district renewal plan, which seeks to upgrade existing retail space, create new retail and parking facilities, and improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation in the area as steps toward re-establishing its former importance as a regional retail center. Recently announced private plans for the renovation of the former Gilchrist's store on Washington Street into a "vertical shopping arcade" could also contribute to this revitalization.

The amount of influence that these developments in the shopping district will have on the area around the Union will depend largely on whether they trigger new development along Washington Street on the blocks in between, which are currently blighted and act as a barrier to widespread pedestrian movement. A portion of one of these blocks, on the west side of Washington between West and Avery Streets, which contains a number of notable late 19th and 20th century theater buildings been proposed for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. If successful, this listing would provide various incentives for the buildings' renovation.

The block on which the Union now stands, bounded by Boylston, Washington, Stuart, and Tremont Streets, is among a number of sites currently being looked at for new Federal office construction. This could result in the building's being threatened, either directly by site acquisition for new development, or by increased development pressure on surrounding parcels as a result of it.

All of these planned, proposed, and possible development projects are expected to create a climate favorable for additional new investment, and particularly for the rehabilitation and re-use of existing structures. In this regard, the B.R.A. is currently undertaking a study, called New Neighborhoods Downtown, to explore the feasibility of converting underused or vacant space in downtown buildings to residential use. The study has so far identified 9 target areas, two of which overlap or are included in the area under the discussion. The need for additional market-rate residential

space in the area has been evidenced recently by the successful renovation of the former Hotel Tourraine on the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets (adjacent to the Union) into primarily studio and one-bedroom apartments designed to appeal to young working people. The building is now 90% occupied.

As a result of anticipated development activity, the B.R.A. is currently preparing comprehensive land use and design guidelines for the Adult Entertainment area which will identify potential development parcels and buildings targeted for rehabilitation, and seek to create pedestrian linkages between the area and downtown.

Taken together, these anticipated new developments are certain to spell major long range changes in the area, both in the character, volume, and peak hours of traffic, and in real estate values, rent levels, vacancy rates, and intensity of speculation on undeveloped parcels. It is hoped that these changes will counteract the sub standard conditions and underutilization of space in and around the Adult Entertainment District, which has acted to discourage new investment and hurt nearby "legitimate" uses such as the B.Y.M.C.U. Thus, the major issue for the Union, located close to these anticipated changes, will be its ability to survive rising land values and resist development pressures in order to benefit from its increasingly advantageous location, which could only serve to increase its membership and enhance its image.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives

Both the significance of the structure and the language of the Commission's enabling statute, which precludes all but Landmark designations in the central city, limit the designation category to that of Landmark.

The only alternative protection device would be inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, which would, if successfully pursued, afford a limited degree of protection.

The Commission also retains the option of not designating the building as a Landmark.

6.2 Impact of Alternatives

Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, though it does not prevent a private owner from demolishing a building with private funds, does provide tax incentives for re-use of existing historic structures. The Tax Reform Act of 1976 prohibits both the deduction of demolition costs from Federal Income Taxes, and the use of accelerated depreciation for a new structure built on the site of former National Register property.

Furthermore, a Section 106 Review is required when Federal funds are involved in the demolition or significant alteration of a National Register property. This review process gives all interested Federal Agencies, as well as the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a chance to make recommendations on the proposed change.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommend that the Boston Young Men's Christian Union Building be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, and that the property be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The standards and criteria recommended for administering the regulatory functions provided for in Chapter 772 are attached.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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9.0 BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

9.1 Introductory Statement on Standards and Criteria to be Used in Evaluating Applications for Certificates for Landmark Designation

Per Sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for 1975), Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Landmark Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the property. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of the Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purposes of the statute.

The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation. 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 insure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reasons 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.

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

Introductory Statement on Standards and Criteria
page two

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:

- a) Building code conformance and safety requirements.
- b) Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems.
- c) 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 Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels: (1) those general ones that are common to almost all landmark designations (with three different categories for buildings, building interiors and landscape features); and (2) those specific ones that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standard and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

9.2 General Standards and Criteria

A. APPROACH

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 the exterior alterations that will be allowed.
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. ("Later integral features" shall be the term used to convey this concept.)
3. Deteriorated material or architectural features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later integral features.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The use of imitation replacement materials is generally discouraged.
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. Contemporary design is encouraged for new additions; thus, they must not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.

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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. Color will be considered as part of specific standards and criteria that apply to a particular property.

B. EXTERIOR WALLS

I. MASONRY

1. Retain whenever possible, original masonry and mortar.
2. Duplicate original mortar in composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile and method of application.
3. Repair and replace deteriorated masonry with material which matches as closely as possible.
4. When necessary to clean masonry, use gentlest method possible. Do not sandblast. Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration. Test patches should always be carried out well in advance of cleaning (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
5. Avoid applying waterproofing or water repellent coating to masonry, unless required to solve a specific problem. Such coatings can accelerate deterioration.
6. In general, do not paint masonry surfaces. 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.

II NON-MASONRY

1. Retain and repair original or later integral material whenever possible.
2. Retain and repair, when necessary, deteriorated material with material that matches.

C. ROOFS

1. Preserve the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape.
2. Retain original roof covering whenever possible.
3. Whenever possible, replace deteriorated roof covering with material which matches the old in composition, size shape, color, texture, and installation detail.
4. Preserve architectural features which give the roof its character, such as cornices, gutters, iron filigree, cupolas, dormers, brackets.

D. WINDOWS AND DOORS

1. Retain original and later integral door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.
2. Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later integral window elements such as sash, lintels, sills, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorations and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
3. On some properties consideration will be given to changing from the original window details to other expressions such as to a minimal anonymous treatment by the use of a single light, when consideration of cost, energy conservation or appropriateness override the desire for historical accuracy. In such cases, consideration must be given to the resulting effect on the interior as well as the exterior of the building.

E. PORCHES, STEPS AND EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

1. Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later integral features including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ironwork, benches, fountains, statues and decorative items.

F. SIGNS, MARQUEES AND AWNINGS

1. Signs, marquees and awnings integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be retained and repaired where necessary.
2. New signs, marquees and awnings shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
3. New signs, marquees and awnings shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.
4. Signs, marquees and awnings applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building.
5. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.
6. Lettering forms or typeface will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally shall either be contemporary or relate to the period of the building or its later integral features.
7. Lighting of signs will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.
8. The foregoing notwithstanding, signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in structures being reused for purposes different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.

G PENTHOUSES

1. The objective of preserving the integrity of the original or later integral roof shape shall provide the basic criteria in judging whether a penthouse can be added to a roof. Height of a building, prominence of roof form, and visibility shall govern whether a penthouse will be approved.
2. Minimizing or eliminating the visual impact of the penthouse is the general objective and the following guidelines shall be followed:
 - a) Location shall be selected where the penthouse is not visible from the street or adjacent buildings; setbacks shall be utilized.
 - b) Overall height or other dimensions shall be kept to a point where the penthouse 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.

H LANDSCAPE FEATURES

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later integral landscape features that enhance the landmark property.
2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the landmark and its newer surroundings.

3. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the landmark or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the landmark.
4. Original layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas should be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the landmark.
5. Existing healthy plant materials should be maintained as long as possible. New plant materials should be added on a schedule that will assure a continuity in the original landscape design and its later adaptations.
6. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider maintaining existing vistas of the landmark.

I EXTERIOR LIGHTING

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 lighting fixtures shall be retained. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
3. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
 - a) Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
 - b) Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.

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- c) New lighting fixtures which are contemporary in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
- 4. If a fixture is to be replaced, the new exterior lighting shall be located where intended in the original design. If supplementary lighting is added, the new location shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.
- 5. 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.

J. REMOVAL OF LATER ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

- 1. Each property will be separately studied to determine if later additions and alterations can, or should, be removed. It is not possible to provide one general guideline.
- 2. Factors that will be considered 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.
 - d) Functional usefulness.

10.0 SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Boston Young Men's Christian Union
48 Boylston Street, Boston

A. General

1. The intent is to preserve the overall character of the building; its mass in the definition of the city street and sidewalk; and its richness of detail.
2. Although the designation applies to the exterior of the building, the Commission encourages the continued utilization and increased enhancement of the richness of materials and details that exists in the interior.
3. The elevations along Boylston and Tamworth Streets, and Lowell Court shall be subject to all the guidelines for the building's exterior herein stated.

B. Walls

1. No new openings shall be allowed in the masonry walls, nor existing openings removed or changed in size.
2. All exterior detail, ornamentation, grillwork, and lighting fixtures shall be preserved.

C. Windows

1. Existing window openings shall be retained. Existing sash may be replaced where required, but where replaced shall match originals in materials, number and size of lights, and in section of muntins. Tudor-arched second floor sash shall be retained or replaced to match.
2. Window frames shall be of a color similar to or darker than masonry walls. Replacement frames shall match originals in section and details of installation.

D. Ground Floor

1. All remaining original main entrance and storefront material, including doors and ornamentation, shall be preserved. New signage and lighting shall not obscure original building fabric.

2. Any necessary replacement or repair work on ground floor shall attempt to match existing elements exactly.

E. Penthouses

1. Penthouses and enclosures visible from the streets approaching the building shall not be permitted.

F. Additions

1. No additions in height shall be permitted unless owner wishes to reconstruct clock tower, in which case, construction must follow documented original design.
2. No additions or projections outside the building's facade planes shall be permitted.
3. New construction on adjacent parcel(s) which is integrated with the present structure, if ever undertaken, should respect its scale, design, and horizontal facade treatment.

