

The John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House

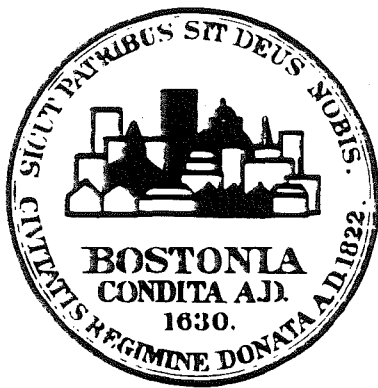
Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report



Petition #164, 5 Post Office Square, Boston

**THE JOHN W. MCCORMACK POST OFFICE
AND COURT HOUSE**

5 Post Office Square, Boston



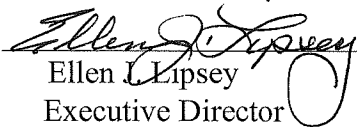
Boston Landmarks Commission
Environment Department
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of

THE JOHN W. MCCORMACK POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE
5 Post Office Square, Boston, Massachusetts

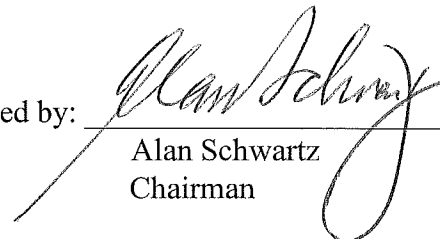
as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by:

 12/17/97
Ellen J. Lipsey
Executive Director

Date

Approved by:

 12/17/97
Alan Schwartz
Chairman

Date

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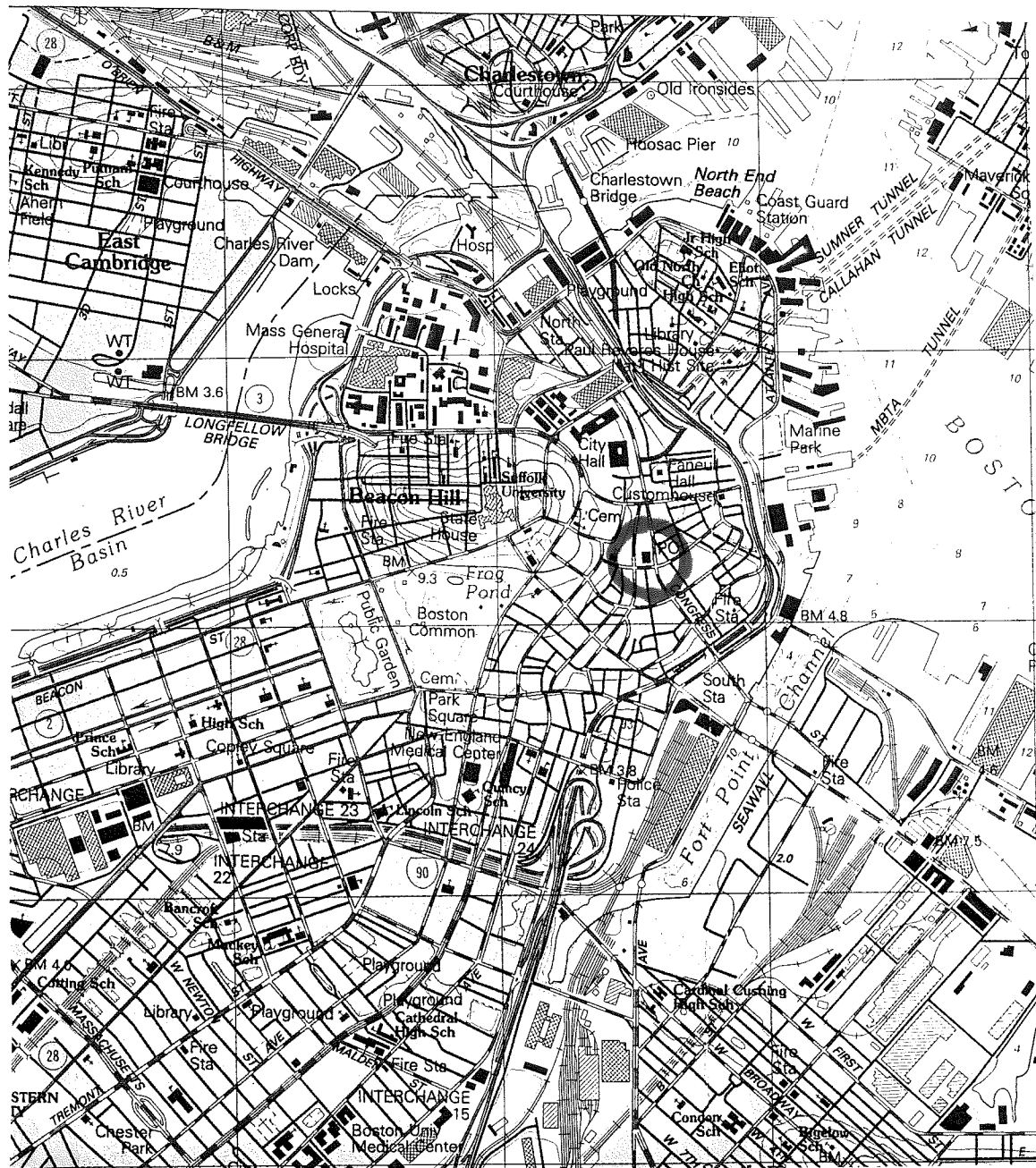
1.0 LOCATION OF PROPERTY

1.1 Address: 5 Post Office Square, Boston, Massachusetts 02109
Assessor's parcel number: Ward 3, Parcel 3881.

1.2 Area in Which Property is Located:

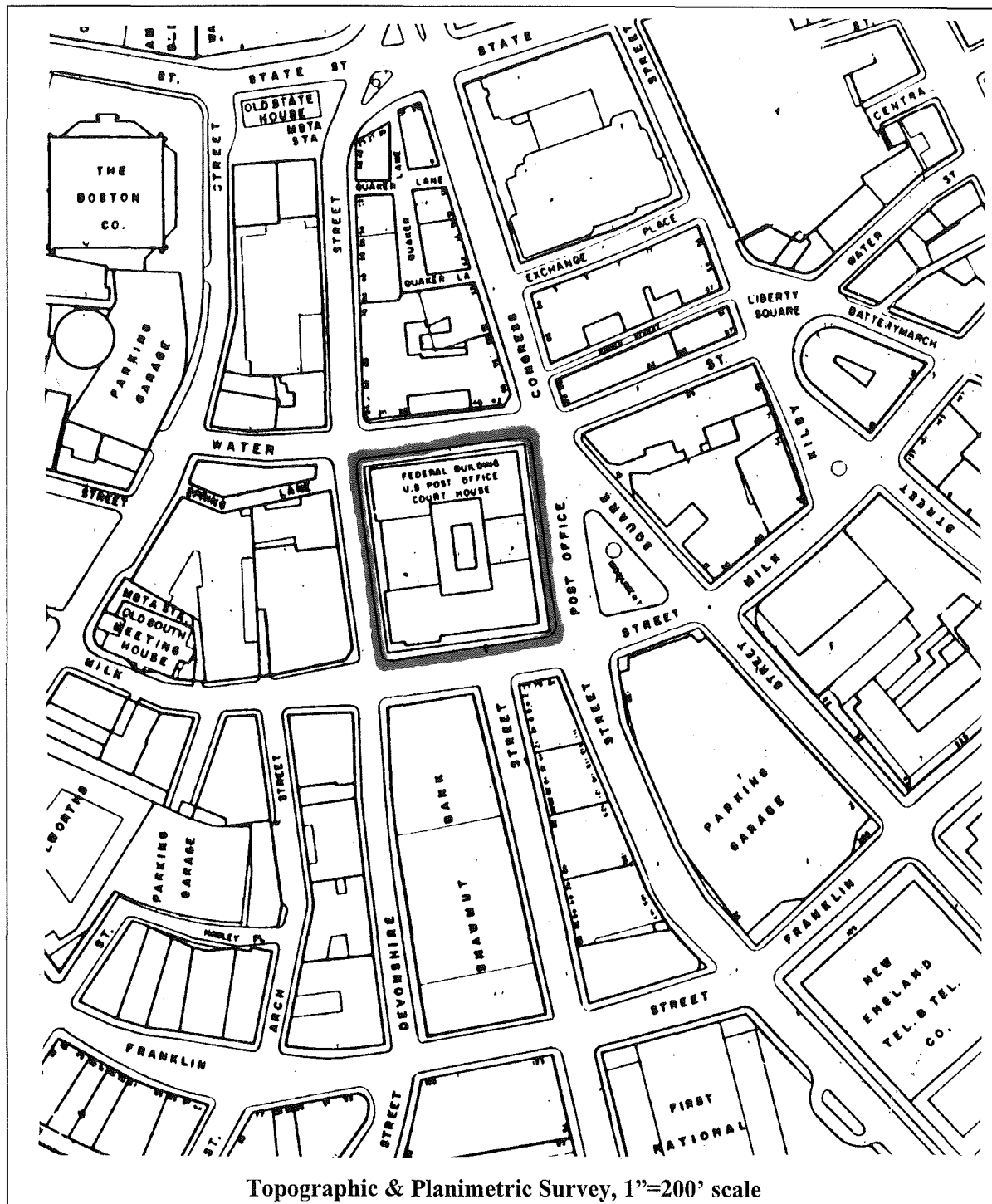
The John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House occupies a large city block in the heart of Boston's Financial District. Bounded by Water, Devonshire, Milk, and Congress streets, its primary facade faces onto Post Office Square.

1.3 Map Showing Location:
Attached.



Location Map

USGS Topographical Map - Boston South
 5 Post Office Square
 Boston, Massachusetts



John W. McCormack Federal Building, 5 Post Office Square
Boston, Massachusetts

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use

The John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House was constructed between 1931 and 1933 to accommodate Boston's expanding federal presence. Originally known as the "Federal Building," it was rededicated on 19 May 1972 in honor of John W. McCormack, a distinguished legislator from South Boston who served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1962 to 1971.¹ As built, the interior plan contained specialized areas for postal operations and the U.S. District Court, although the bulk of the structure was given over to generic government office space. Upon completion in 1933, its tenant roster boasted the following federal agencies: Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Judiciary, Labor, Navy, Post Office, State, Treasury and War.

Until 1978, the McCormack Building continued to house the U.S. Courts, the U.S. Postal Service, the General Service Administration, the Civil Service Commission and several other agencies. Relocation of Postal Service functions to the South Boston Postal Annex in 1980 freed 70,000 square feet of space on the second through fifth floors.² A later exodus of federal agencies to the Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neil Building in 1986 further alleviated overcrowding. The U.S. District Court, the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and related Department of Justice agencies are scheduled to vacate the McCormack Building in 1998, upon completion of the new U.S. Court House at Fan Pier.

2.2 Physical Description

The McCormack Post Office and Court House is a formidable physical presence within Boston's financial district. Its 1930 design represents a collaborative effort between the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department, then overseer of federal office construction, and the nationally-prominent, Boston-based firm of Cram and Ferguson. Supervising Architect James A. Wetmore's office prepared the building's general plans based on standardized formulas for postal and judiciary functions. The project was supervised locally by Franklin M. Hull, a construction engineer with the Supervising Architect's Office.³ Ralph Adams Cram, founding partner of Cram & Ferguson, received the commission to design the building's facade, as well as interior finishes for primary public spaces, most notably the Post Office Lobby and the Court's original quarters on the twelfth and fifteenth floors.

This free-standing, granite-clad skyscraper occupies an acre-sized parcel measuring 227' x 207' x 248' x 201' feet. The building's impressive girth spans thirteen bays along Congress and Devonshire streets and eleven bays along the narrow urban canyons of Water and Milk streets. Its powerful massing consists of a "U"-shaped configuration of three towers. The recessed central tower rises twenty-two stories, while the lower flanking towers each terminate at the seventeenth story. An entry pavilion fills the basement levels and first four-stories of the building's central core. Although federal buildings are exempt from city zoning constraints, this building adheres to the spirit of Boston's 1928 zoning amendment which permitted building heights to exceed 155 feet, provided certain set-back rules were

¹This federal building is not to be confused with the state office building at One Ashburton Place which also bears McCormack's name.

² General Services Administration, *Construction of New Federal Office Building: Repair and Alteration of John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse*, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, No. EMA78002 (March 31, 1978).

³"Corner Stone Laid at Post Office," *Boston Globe*, 5 January 1932.

followed. In this instance light and air concerns were addressed by the deep central light court which spans the fifth through sixteenth floors.

The McCormack Building is oriented towards Post Office Square. This primary, east-facing elevation is distinguished by the building's signature set-back and its monumental four-story portal. Due to the parcel's sloping grade, the building's main lobby is split between two stories, with the Post Office Square entrance located at basement level and the Devonshire Street entrance at first-story level. This change in grade is highlighted on the building's exterior by a basement-level course of polished black granite which is fully exposed along the lower Post Office Square elevation.

The building's reinforced-concrete construction is concealed by granite-block veneer supplied by several prominent New England quarries. In addition to the basement course of polished, dark Quincy granite, the contractor used dressed, gray New Hampshire (Concord) granite at the first and second story, and a similar-hued Chelmsford granite for the upper stories. A running band of granite fret carving embellishes the first-story water table. Somewhat incongruously, a less-expensive Indiana ("Ingall's") limestone was used to clad the light well and the central tower's upper five stories.

The McCormack Building's design reflects an interesting hybrid of 1920s aesthetic influences. It displays Art Deco form and fenestration, although its ornament is largely derived from a Classical vocabulary. Ralph Adams Cram described this amalgamation as "functional-modernistic." The building's strongest claim to Art Deco stature is its streamlined verticality, whereby a rhythmic pattern of stone piers and rib-like stone mullions emphasizes the building's height. This vertical thrust is further conveyed by the striated fenestration of aluminum, double-hung sash linked vertically by aluminum spandrels. Cast or pressed-sheet aluminum spandrels were widely used in the 1920s and '30s, most notably on the Chrysler Building (1930, William Van Alen) and the Empire State Building (1931, Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon).⁴ In this instance, the spandrels' vertical ridges mimic the building's dominant window configuration of 3/3 sash. Given the oblique views of the building created by the narrow widths of Milk, Water and Devonshire streets, the architects concentrated most ornamental details at street level. For instance, the aluminum spandrels between the first and second story display a decorative abstract design which is far more complex than the design of the spandrels above.

Although originally specifying carved stone, Cram & Ferguson ultimately used terra cotta with a Granitex finish to embellish the facade. These decorative terra cotta panels, measuring 3'-6"x 10'-3," are concentrated at the entries, belt courses, and towers. The third-story belt course is distinguished by relief panels displaying stylized flora and caducei. According to Greek mythology, the caduceus, or serpent-entwined wand, was the symbol of Mercury, postman to Olympia.⁵ This symbol, however, is better-known as the professional insignia of physicians, for which Mercury is the mythological patron.

As the eye travels up toward each tower's terminus, the building's hard-edged verticality is softened by the chamfered treatment of the piers. Widely used by Art Deco architects, this chamfered tower treatment was popularized by Raymond Hood's 1924 design for the American Radiator Building in New York City. The tower-level belt course displays relief

⁴Thomas C. Jester, ed., *Twentieth-Century Building Materials* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), p. 49.

⁵Charles G. Loring, "The Boston Federal Building," *American Architect* (November 1933) : 15.

panels of stylized, flowering wheat. Above this, bundles of staves, symbolizing the proverb "united we stand; divided we fall," stand astride each pier. The crag-like parapets at the 17th story are distinguished by square, terra cotta panels with stylized, spread-winged eagle motifs.

The monumental Post Office Square portal offers a profusion of stone and terra cotta ornament. Four colossal granite pilasters, with a running band of carved fleur-de-lis molding along their inner reveals, rise from basement/entry level to the third story. These pilasters support a shallow balcony with decorative terra cotta panels. This balcony or fourth-story level is capped by an embattled terra cotta parapet embellished with palmette motifs. At ground-level, the two outer entry bays contain glazed, aluminum doors; a later revolving door was installed in the central bay. The 1930 plans reveal these entries originally held glazed, paneled bronze doors. The polished black marble door surrounds feature an incised eagle-and-wreath motif. The overdoor panel displays a classical urn and scroll design.

Richly-patterned bronze grills in aluminum frames screen the portal's fenestration, covering both windows and spandrels. These decorative, cast bronze grills also cover the basement-level windows along Post Office Square, Milk, and Water streets. Their delicate, stylized flora patterns create the illusion of stained glass when viewed from the interior.

Less majestic than the Post Office Square elevation, the Devonshire Street portal is a single bay in width and two-stories in height. It occupies the middle bay of a shallow central setback, measuring five bays in width. This setback articulates the width of the building's central 22-story tower. In addition to the polished black marble door surround, this entry is ornamented with stylized palmette motifs, caduceus panels, and a central unadorned medallion. Bronze grills cover the first two stories of this facade's central three bays.

The secondary entries at Milk and Water Street are on axis with the first-story Post Office Lobby. Both entries display polished black marble surrounds with the incised eagle-and-wreath motif. Their overdoors are less ornate than those of Post Office Square; Milk Street's panel is distinguished by a row of paterae, while Water Street's panel is embellished with a stylized palm. The building's two delivery bays are located on the Post Office Square elevation. These truck entries, measuring 12'x12', are secured by wood-paneled garage doors.

Cram & Ferguson eschewed traditional Beaux Arts trappings such as projecting cornices and slavishly accurate revivalist guises, but did not fully exploit the possibilities of steel-framed, curtain-wall construction. The building's thick corner piers create the illusion of load-bearing masonry construction, as does the large percentage of exterior surface given over to granite veneer.

The interior plan reflects the building's "U"-shaped massing. The basement levels and first three floors cover the entire parcel. The fourth floor is "O"-shaped due to a central light well and freight elevator penthouse. The fifth through sixteenth floors are "U"-shaped in plan. While the seventeenth through twenty-second floors are confined to the central recessed tower. The building is serviced by ten elevators.

Interior finishes of note include the Post Office Lobby's (i.e., Devonshire Street level) fluted, pink Tennessee marble walls and terrazzo floors. The three original court rooms, on

the twelfth and fifteenth floors, have a stripped classical aesthetic. The 12th-floor Court Library is a dignified two-story space, distinguished by a stripped classical decor of black marble veneer, with an ornate bronze door surround, coffered plaster ceiling, and balcony level with decorative bronze railing.

This remarkably well-preserved building has suffered few significant alterations over time. Its exterior masonry appears in good condition.

2.4 Photographs

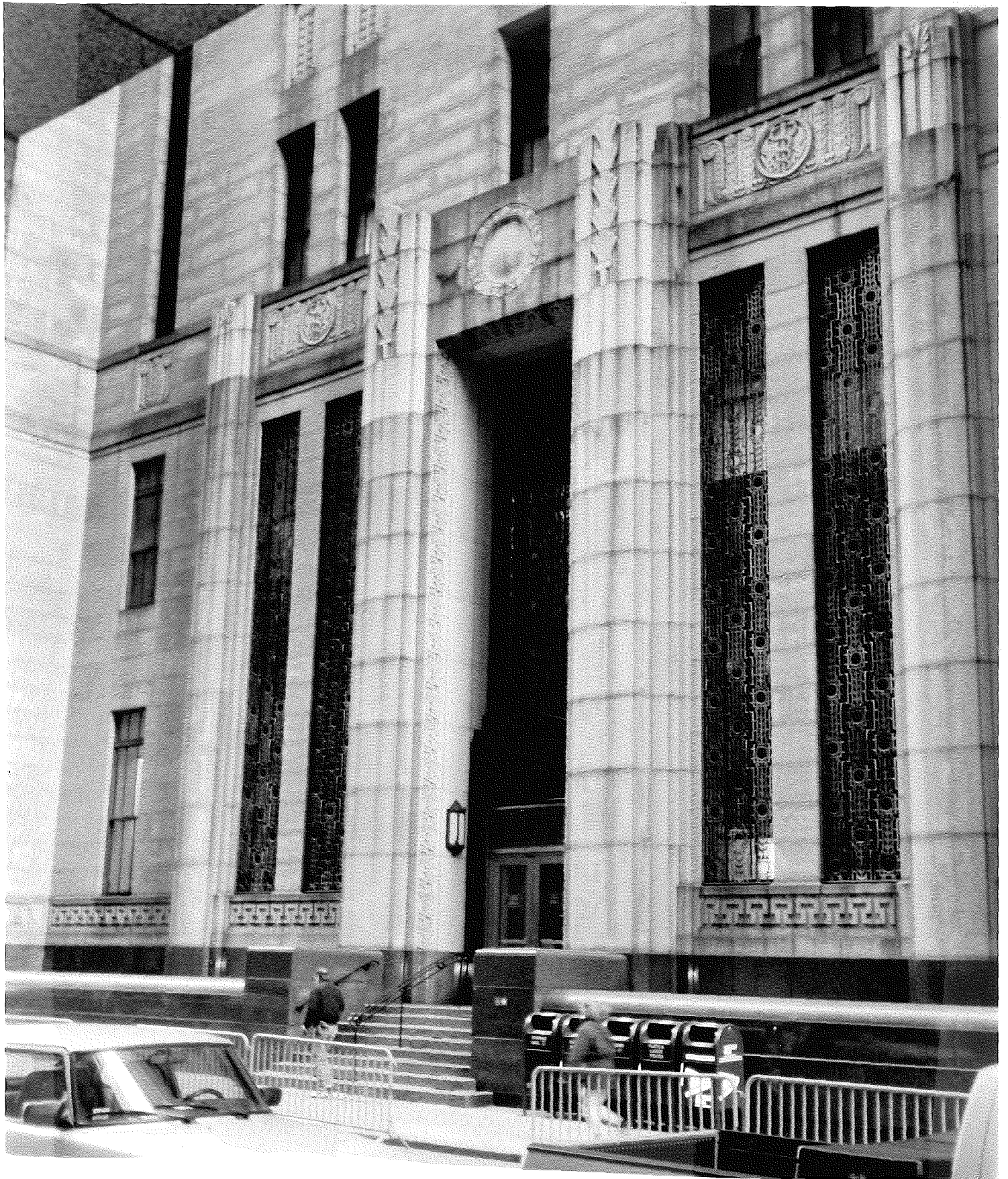
Attached.



John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Post Office Square and Milk Street elevations
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997



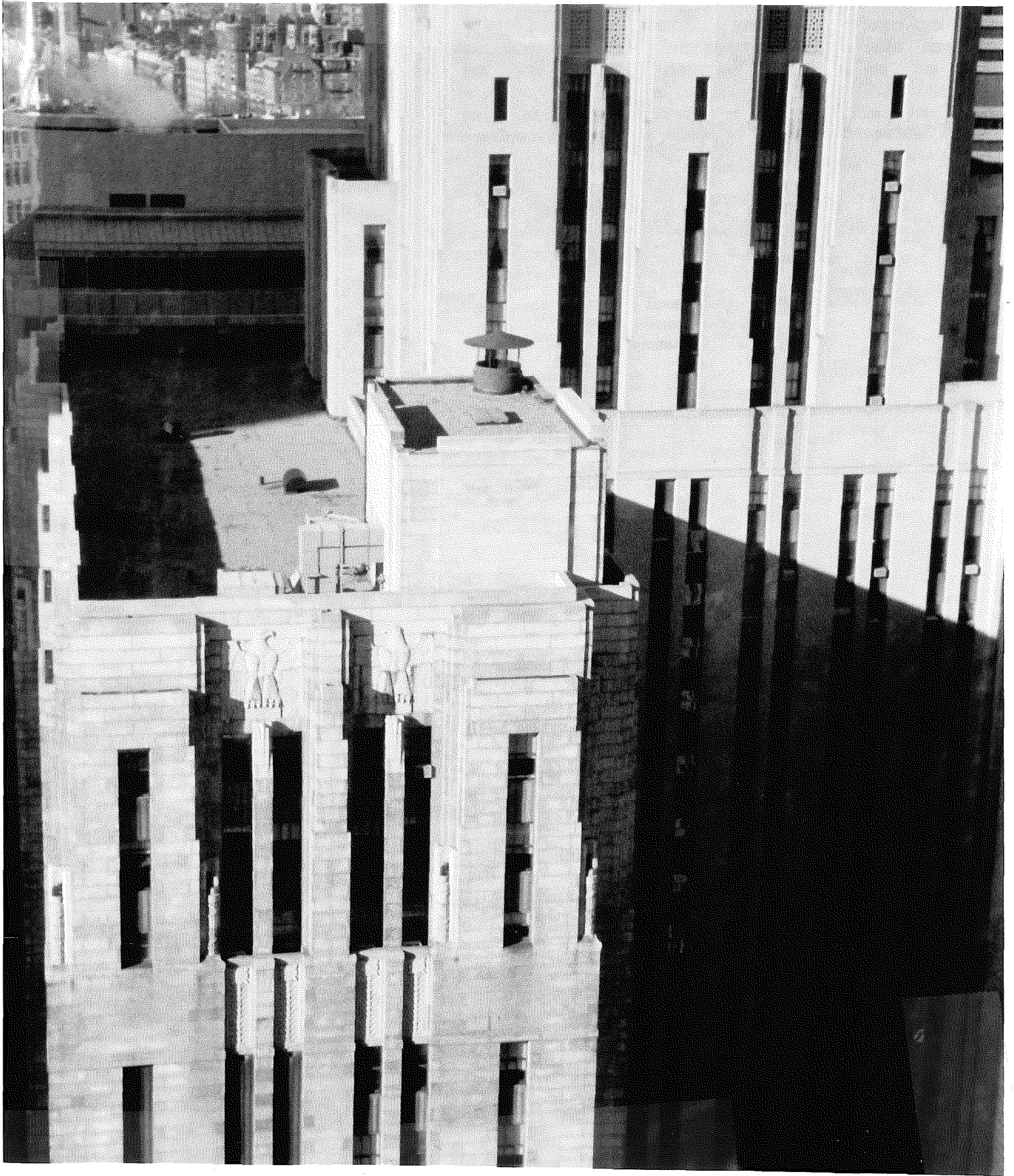
John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Post Office Square Elevation (detail: water table, aluminum spandrels, grills, and sash)
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997



John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Devonshire Street Portal
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997



John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Post Office Square Portal (detail: decorative terra cotta tiles)
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997

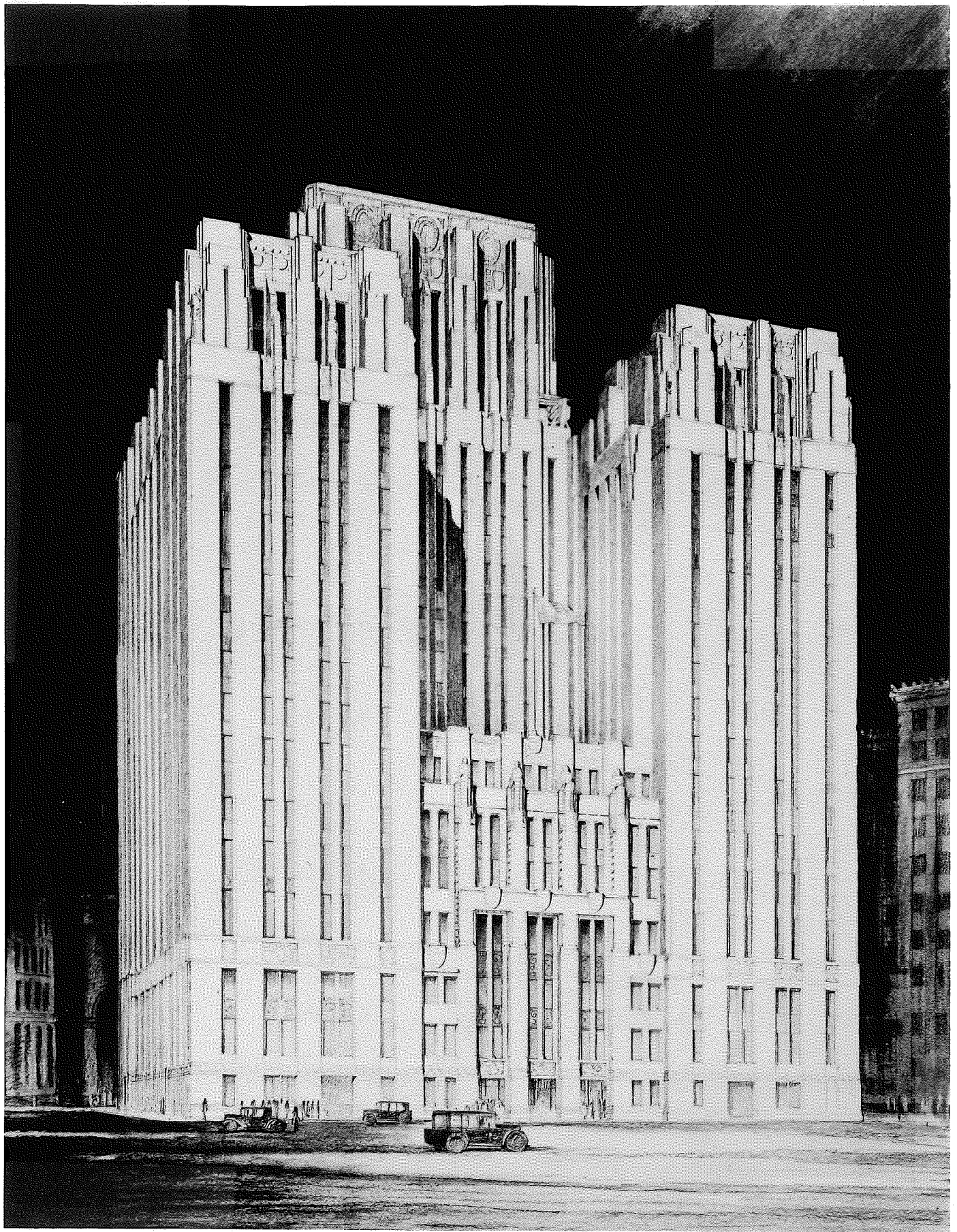


John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Towers

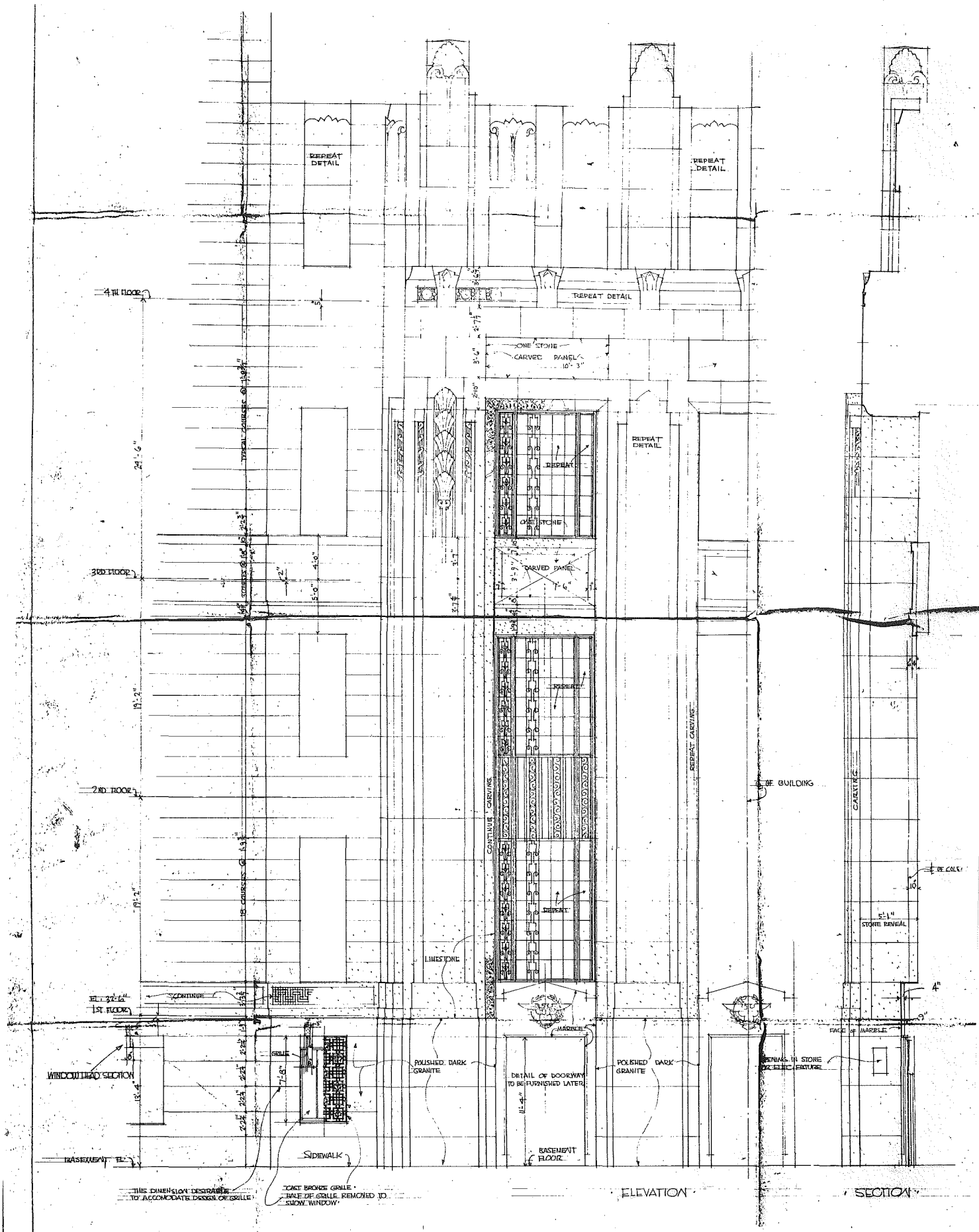
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997



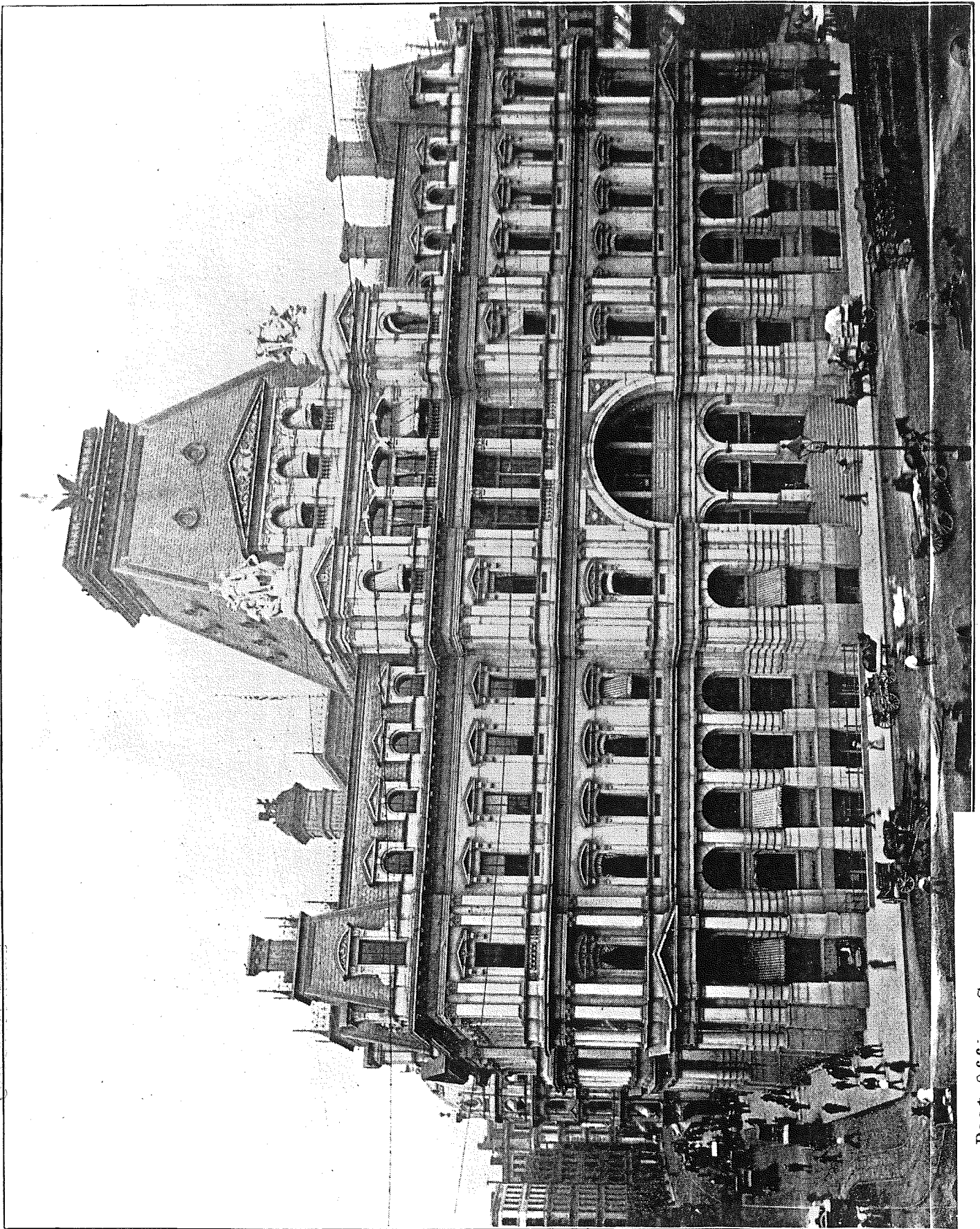
John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Post Office Square Portal
Photo Credit: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1997



Proposed Federal Building, Boston, Mass. (undated)
Cram & Ferguson Collection, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library
Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.



Post Office Square Portal: Elevation & Section, April 1930
 Cram & Ferguson Collection, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library
 Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.



Post Office Square

1947 # 1947

U.S. Post Office and Sub-Treasury
 Demolished in 1928 to clear site for Boston's new Federal Building
 Reproduced courtesy of the Bostonian Society.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

Opened in 1933, to serve as the federal government's regional headquarters, the Federal Building (renamed the John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House in 1972) bore witness to Boston's continued preeminence as New England's civic and economic hub. Planned prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929, its construction history spanned the early and darkest years of the Depression. This federal commission promised a rare source of jobs for local building trades, an opportunity which the Massachusetts Congressional delegation successfully exploited to create additional economic benefits for area constituents. This project was an early and widely-emulated example of the "multiplier effect," whereby federal contracts are used to inject dollars into a depressed economy. This principal became the foundation of later "New Deal" legislation.

The John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House (hereafter the "McCormack Building") possesses important associations with regional and national legal history, specifically the 20th-century proceedings of the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. When opened in 1933, the federal courts occupied the twelfth and fifteenth floors. The building's basement and first five stories were given over to Boston's U.S. Post Office, then our nation's fourth largest postal district covering 270 square miles and serving two million people.⁶ The remaining floors contained office space for ten federal departments, as well as the Veterans' Bureau, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Shipping Board and the Civil Service Commission.⁷

3.1 Historic Significance

Construction History

The McCormack Building stands on the site of its 1870s predecessor – the grand Second Empire U.S. Post Office and Sub-Treasury Building designed by Alfred B. Mullett (1834-1890). Similar in appearance to both the Suffolk County Court House and Boston's Old City Hall, this mansard-roofed, paired-column masterpiece was demolished in 1928 to clear a 48,614 square foot parcel for the new federal building. During Mullett's tenure as Assistant Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury Department, the Second Empire style was used extensively for federal commissions. While attractive to our eyes, this extremely ornate style experienced a severe backlash in terms of early 20th-century popular appeal. Writing in 1927, a *Boston Transcript* reporter advocated replacing "the massive, ugly Cape Ann granite 'French Renaissance' structure" with "something entirely modern."⁸ His article concluded with the following wish: "let us hope that the new building will be designed with a lighter touch than the Mulletian structure, and that we shall have in it a union of beauty and utility."⁹

Boston's Federal Building was one of approximately 1,300 federal office structures constructed in the aftermath of the 1926 "Public Buildings Act."¹⁰ After placing a thirteen-year moratorium on new office construction, Congress instructed the U. S. Treasury Department to take stock of the government's spatial requirements. Not surprisingly, the

⁶*Boston Globe* (Evening Edition), 6 May 1931, p.10.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸"The Nomad," *Boston Transcript*, 17 January 1927.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Lois Craig, ed., *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United Government Building* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978), p.280

Department's initial reports reflected a severe shortage of federal office space. Supported by this needs assessment data, the Hoover Administration and Congress authorized funding for new federal office construction in 1928. In 1933, this program was placed under the New Deal's Public Works Administration.¹¹ To manage this massive project, the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department developed standardized plans to address the specific spatial requirements of each government function. In order to realize economies of scale, previously segregated agencies, such as postal service, courts, custom house, and civic service, were housed together under one roof. In Boston and elsewhere, these buildings were named the "Federal Building."

In 1927, U.S. Congressman Tinkham seized the opportunity presented by the Public Buildings Act and filed for appropriations "to tear down the present Post Office Building and erect a new twelve-story Federal building in its place."¹² Federal agencies began vacating the Mullet building in 1928, with postal operations relocating to the Brewer Building on State Street and the courts taking up temporary residence at Youngs Hotel.¹³ Demolition spanned the Summer and Fall of 1929.¹⁴

In the aftermath of the Stock Market crash, construction plans for Boston's new Federal Building were closely scrutinized. No longer viewed simply as a civic enhancement, this large commission promised jobs and welcomed relief to an otherwise paralyzed economy. Seeking to stimulate related benefits for their districts, U.S. Representatives Edith Rogers of Lowell and Richard Wigglesworth of Milton waged a successful lobbying campaign in the Winter of 1930 to increase the project's allocation from \$4,500,000.00 to \$6,000,000.00.¹⁵ This additional funding would allow the substitution of New England granite for the proposed, less-expensive Indiana limestone veneer, thereby creating jobs for the quarry workers of Chelmsford and Quincy. This exterior cladding revision later wreaked havoc on the contract's bidding process.

The Treasury Department advertised the construction contract in December 1930. Interested parties were instructed to submit two bid proposals: one for a granite-clad structure, and the other for a limestone structure. Of fourteen contestants, the N.P. Severin Company of Chicago submitted the lowest bid for an all-granite structure, although their \$5.6 million offer exceeded the project's budget.¹⁶ The Seglin Construction Company of New York presented the lowest overall bid, in response to the limestone-only option. Massachusetts' congressional delegation pressured the Treasury Department to select a granite-veneer option. After tweaking the construction specifications to accommodate the more expensive New England stone, the Treasury Department requested supplemental bids from the original pool of contestants in February 1931. The lowest supplemental bid, Severin Company's \$4.8 million offer for an all-granite exterior, still exceeded the project's budget. Once again the specifications were examined for cost savings. More dramatic revisions were made, eliminating some of the exterior granite, simplifying the exterior design, eliminating most of the interior marble, and substituting iron and other metals for bronze.¹⁷ Following a second round of supplementary bids, on March 25, 1931 the

¹¹Ibid.

¹²*Boston Transcript*, 17 January 1927, (SPNEA Archives: Post Office Square Articles).

¹³*Boston Globe*, 6 May 1931, p.10.

¹⁴Demolition contract awarded in July 1929.

¹⁵*Boston Herald*, 29 March 1931, p.1.

¹⁶The \$6 million allocation included not only construction costs, but also demolition and site preparation costs.

¹⁷"Post Office of Granite is Certain," *The Boston Post*, 25 March 1931, p.2.

Treasury Department awarded the contract to the Severin Company based on their winning bid of \$4,648,900. The project was to be completed within two years' time.

The Associated General Contractors of America challenged the legitimacy of the Treasury Department's supplemental bidding process, arguing it amounted to contract peddling. U.S. Comptroller-General J. R. McCarl threatened to nullify Severin's contract on grounds that the job should have been re-advertised with revised specifications. Succumbing to pressure from Massachusetts politicians eager to release a flow of federal dollars to their constituents, McCarl withdrew his objections on May 5, 1931.

The cornerstone was laid on January 5, 1932 with a formal ceremony attended by New England's full complement of dignitaries. Postmaster William E. Hurley cemented the cornerstone in place.¹⁸ The day's theme of hope in the midst of economic despair, was reiterated in speeches by Mayor James M. Curley, Federal Judge James M. Lowell, Collector of Port Wilfred W. Lufkin, and local clergy. Construction was completed by September of 1933.

Judicial History

The McCormack Building is associated with the 20th-century legacy of the Massachusetts U.S. District Court and the U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals. The U.S. District Courts were established under the Judiciary Act of 1789. Prior to 1930, the federal courts dealt primarily with admiralty, patent, railroad, bankruptcy, and diversity cases.¹⁹ In the wake of the Depression, the courts' role expanded to address interstate commerce, income tax, and immigrant deportation cases.

In 1891, Congress created the modern court of appeals "to relieve the Supreme Court from an intolerable burden of mandated appeals from the federal district courts."²⁰ The First Circuit Court of Appeals covers the eastern New England region, specifically Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Since 1915, the First Circuit has taken appeals from Puerto Rico's Federal District Court, as well as from Puerto Rico's Supreme Court.²¹ Puerto Rico has emerged as a major source of cases, second only to Massachusetts in volume of appeals sent to the First Circuit.²² The First Circuit Court of Appeals' 20th-century legacy encompasses three major themes: 1.) Depression-era challenges to New Deal legislation; 2.) progressive 1950s and '60s rulings upholding the civil rights and constitutional liberties of individuals; and 3.) post-1970 affirmative injunctions addressing state and local governments' failure to comply with specific federal laws.

The 1930s rulings of the First Circuit Court of Appeals were conspicuous for challenging the constitutionality of several important pieces of New Deal legislation. Led by George Hutchins Bingham, a progressive Wilson appointee, the court's majority opinions bore the imprint of its conservative Hoover appointees, Scott Wilson, the former Republican Attorney General for Maine, and James Morton, a textile manufacturer. In *Butler v. United States*, a case involving the constitutionality of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935, the First Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a decision upholding the taxing provisions of the

¹⁸"Corner Stone Laid at Post Office," *Boston Globe Evening Edition*, 5 January 1932.

¹⁹George Dargo, *A History of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit: 1891-1960* Volume I. (Boston: published by the author, 1993), p.110.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p.iii.

²¹*Ibid.*, p.110.

²²*Ibid.*

Act. The majority decision held that “the Act put too much discretion in the hands of the Secretary of Agriculture and, consequently, represented an unconstitutional delegation of legislative responsibility.”²³ Later sustained by the equally conservative U.S. Supreme Court, this decision dealt a sharp blow to an inaugural piece of President Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. A subsequent attack on the Social Security Act of 1935 also stemmed from a First Circuit reversal of a decision upholding the tax’s validity.²⁴

The First Circuit Court of Appeals during Judge Bailey Aldrich’s tenure (1956-1970) was renown for its progressive decisions regarding the protection of individual civil rights. In 1956, during the height of the “Red Scare,” Senator Joseph McCarthy targeted Harvard University as part of his on-going investigation into “communist-infiltrated” institutions doing defense-related research.²⁵ More than five hundred people crowded into Post Office Square to attend the contempt trial of Leon Kamin, a Harvard employee who freely admitted his party affiliations but refused to identify other Communists at the University. In one of the earliest challenges to McCarthy’s inquest, Aldrich acquitted Kamin on the ground that Congress had given McCarthy’s special subcommittee power to review government operations.²⁶ Aldrich found that this investigation was in fact into private defense contractors, not government agency oversight of them - and hence was beyond the committee’s jurisdiction.”²⁷

In 1969, Judge Aldrich presided over the appeal of *United States v. Spock*. In this case, nationally-renown pediatrician Benjamin Spock and three other defendants were convicted of conspiracy to counsel or aid Vietnam-War draft resisters. The defendants had been found guilty “due to their involvement in drafting a document entitled ‘A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority,’ in planning and attending a meeting at the Arlington Street Church at which draft cards were burned and others turned in, and in leading a demonstration in Washington involving an attempt to deliver draft cards to the Attorney General.”²⁸ The Court of Appeals reversed the convictions, noting that the “Call to Resist” simply showed general sympathy with draft resisters and thus lacked specific intent to counsel illegal resistance. Aldrich’s decision was viewed as an important victory for the First Amendment; it offered broad protection for general protest activities, even those intertwined with direct actions to assist draft resistance that were clearly punishable by Congress.²⁹ One of Judge Aldrich’s final decisions, the 1970 reversal of *Baird v. Eisenstadt*, represented a critical juncture in women’s reproductive rights, and is widely held as the precursor to *Roe v. Wade*.

During the third quarter of the 20th century, Massachusetts’ District Courts demonstrated greater activism within the public sector realm. They issued a wide spectrum of court orders designed to redress lapses in executive or legislative functions. The Boston school desegregation case is perhaps the most famous example of federal involvement in a public institution. In 1974, U.S. District Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr. found that the Boston School Committee had “knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all of

²³Ibid., p. 113.

²⁴Ibid., p. 115.

²⁵Kenneth A. Cohen, “Bailey Aldrich and the Modern First Circuit: Old Virtues and New Civil Liberties Issues,” Volume 74, *Massachusetts Law Review* (December 1989) : 248.

²⁶Ibid., p. 250.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 252.

²⁹Ibid., p. 253.

the city's students, teachers and school facilities and [had] intentionally brought about and maintained a dual school system."³⁰ In order to rectify this violation of the fourteenth amendment, Judge Garrity ordered the Boston School Committee to propose a desegregation plan. Following the Committee's refusal to submit a plan, the entire school system was placed into receivership in 1975.³¹ Other highly-publicized examples of District Court judicial activism include: elimination of discriminatory hiring practices in public agencies (*Castro v. Beecher*, 1983); improved living standards for the institutionalized (*Ricci v. Okin*, 1972); relief of prison overcrowding (*Inmates of Suffolk County Jail v. Kearney*, 1978); integration of public housing (*NAACP v. Harris*, 1983); and the court-ordered Boston Harbor Clean-up (*United States v. Metropolitan District Commission*, 1985).

The McCormack Building was the first structure intentionally built to house Massachusetts' U.S. District Court. From its establishment in 1789 until 1933, this federal court has had a peripatetic existence. Its first session was held at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern. Following this ignominious beginning, the court relocated seven times, occupying in successive order:

- the 1772 Colonial courthouse on Court Street (site of the School Committee Building);
- the Bulfinch-designed, 1812 Suffolk County courthouse on School Street (site of Boston's Old City Hall);
- the Exchange Coffee House (demolished);
- the 1836 Solomon Willard county courthouse (site of the School Committee Building);
- the Samuel Parkman House (Bowdoin Square, demolished);
- the Gothic Revival Masonic Temple (demolished); and
- the U.S. Post Office and Sub-Treasury Building (demolished).

As built, the McCormack Building contained generous facilities for two district judges, specifically three courtrooms and two hearing rooms.³² Since 1933, ten additional courtrooms have been created within the building. Judge Woodlock attributed this 20th-century expanding judicial presence to the following:

- the growth of federal activity in the wake of the New Deal, causing the third district judge to relocate from New Bedford to Boston, plus the creation of a fourth seat;
- the creation of fifth and sixth seats in 1954 and 1967, respectively;
- the 1968 enactment of the Magistrates Act, expanding Massachusetts allotment of magistrates from two to four;
- the addition of four more seats to the district court in 1979; and
- the addition of two final seats in 1985.³³

Created from hearing rooms, chambers, and vacated postal space, these makeshift courtrooms "have the architectural distinction and ambiance of suburban basement family rooms."³⁴ As of 1989, the Boston federal courts occupied space on eighteen of the building's twenty-two floors.

³⁰*Morgan v Hennigan*, 379 F. Supp. 482 (D. Mass.).

³¹Sandra L. Lynch, "Public Institution Litigation in the First Circuit," *Massachusetts Law Review* (Winter 1989) : 264.

³²Douglas P. Woodlock, "The 'Peculiar Embarrassment:' An Architectural History of the Federal Courts in Massachusetts," *Massachusetts Law Review* (Winter 1989) p.275.

³³*Ibid.*, p.276.

³⁴*Ibid.*

3.2 Architectural Significance

Although not a pure example of the style, the McCormack Building is considered one of Boston's most important Art Deco structures. It shares this distinction with the United Shoe Machinery Corporation Building (1929, Parker, Thomas and Rice), the Batterymarch Building (1927, Harold Field Kellogg), and the State Street Bank & Trust (1929, Thomas M. James). Rising twenty-two stories in height, its sheer granite towers provide a dramatic backdrop to Post Office Square.

The McCormack Building is an anomaly among the works of Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942). This 1930 commission came late in the architect's career, at a time when he was flirting with retirement.³⁵ The only government office structure in his repertoire, the McCormack Building diverges markedly from Cram's signature Gothic Revival style. This almost singular devotion to the Gothic aesthetic, particularly the English variant, is exemplified by Cram's slew of church designs, preeminent among these New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine (1910), as well as his numerous "Collegiate Gothic" commissions. His writings too extolled the lofty mission of reviving Gothic architecture for the modern age. Like Ruskin and Upjohn before him, Cram fanned the embers of a style he deemed prematurely smothered by the onslaught of the English Reformation. He adapted this Medieval style with its rich ecclesiastic tradition to a wide range of commissions. For Cram, the Gothic Revival was like a black cocktail dress, perfect for all occasions.

The son of a Unitarian minister, Cram was born in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire in December of 1863. After graduating from Exeter High School, in his native state, Cram apprenticed with the Boston-based architectural firm Rotch & Tilden. Cram briefly tried his hand at journalism before forming an architectural practice with Charles Wentworth (1861-1897) in 1889. In 1891 Bertram G. Goodhue (1869-1924) joined the practice, thereafter named Cram, Wentworth & Goodhue. Following Wentworth's demise, the firm operated as Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson until 1910 when Goodhue established his own separate practice in New York City. Despite Frank Ferguson's death in 1926, the firm's mast head remained Cram & Ferguson through the 1950s.³⁶ In 1925, Cram elevated three young architects to partner status: Frank Cleveland, Chester Godfrey, and Alexander Hoyle.³⁷

The nation's preeminent practitioner of Collegiate Gothic design, Cram served as supervising architect of Princeton University (1907-1929), and consulting architect to Rice University and Wheaton, Williams, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, and Wellesley Colleges. Other noteworthy works attributed to Cram & Ferguson and its predecessors include: All Saints Church, Ashmont (1894); Christ Church, Hyde Park (1892); Ruggles Church, Boston (1917); the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (1903); and the Japanese Garden Court, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (1909).

Cram's early career coincided with the Oxford movement, an Anglo-Catholic fervor which swept through Boston in the 1890s. As much aesthetic as ecclesiastic, this anti-modern movement included a broad interest in medieval, Oriental, and primitive art and culture, and a wider critique of industrial capitalism.³⁸ The beauties of Gothic art and architecture and

³⁵"The Federal Building, Boston, Mass." Cram & Ferguson Collection, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library, 1930.

³⁶In 1957, Cram & Ferguson was officially succeeded by Hoyle, Doran & Berry, Inc.

³⁷Henry and Elsie Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 145.

³⁸Claire Dempsey, "National Register nomination for St. Luke's and St. Margaret's Church," (1997), section 8, p.2.

the pageant of the mass became increasingly popular, with Boston in particular as a focus of Anglo-Catholic believers and institutions.³⁹ This Oxford ideology imbued Cram's architecture and his books, among these: *The Decadent, Black Spirits and White, Church Building*, 1901; *The Ruined Abbeys of Great Britain*, 1906; *Impressions of Japanese Architecture and Allied Arts*, 1906; *The Gothic Quest*, 1907; *Excalibur*, 1908; *The Nemesis of Mediocrity*, 1918; *The Great Thousand Years*, 1918; and *The Catholic Church and Art*, 1929.

The McCormack Building represents Cram's first and only foray into "modern" design. His initial vision for this federal commission was predictably in keeping with the Gothic spirit. Preliminary renderings display a profusion of heraldic crests, while medieval knights stood watch in the towers (their sentry sites later replaced with bundles of staves). At some point in the design process, Cram dismissed his emblematic Gothic Revival style as inappropriate. This departure from architectural precedents, as well as from his own body of work, would seem to represent a dramatic moment in Cram's career. However later writings indicate the architect had reconciled himself to the age in which he lived.

"For a stock exchange or a department store, a moving picture palace, a garage, or a hangar, a skyscraper, a cocktail bar or for the conventicle (sic) of any of the newer forms of religious emotion and experience, it would be as irrational, perverse and misleading to revive the motives and the forms of the past ages as it would be to design a Greek railroad train, a Byzantine motor car, a Gothic battleship, or a Renaissance airplane."⁴⁰

Given his curmudgeon-like derision of modern architecture, Cram found himself in the ironic position of designing the totem of this movement, a skyscraper. Of skyscrapers, Cram wrote:

"In principle, I don't like them at all: for they are quite uneconomic, a fad rather than an intelligent adaptation of needs to reality... They are however, a new thing, couched in the terms of new materials, and with no stylistic connotations whatever - therefore very fascinating to the imagination."⁴¹

In the opening decades of the 20th century, a rift developed between building technology and architectural style, wherein developments in construction practices outpaced aesthetic considerations. As one critic wrote:

"When the engineer posed the greatest of all architectural problems to American architects, the shock was entirely without artistic anticipation. In the dire necessity for clothing this unsightly monster, architecture flew to tradition, and hurriedly devised an artistic formula."⁴²

Most of Boston's early-20th-century commercial structures adhere to the paradigmatic formula outlined in architect Louis Sullivan's 1896 article, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered." The ground level was "devoted to stores, banks, or other establishments requiring large area, ample space, ample light, and great freedom of access." The second story, "accessible by stairways," held large function rooms and "above this an infinite number of stories of offices piled tier upon tier." The ensuing form displayed the familiar base/shaft/capital hierarchy. Steel-framed skyscrapers were sheathed with masonry veneer, typically brick or limestone, which was then ornamented in the vocabulary of some revivalist style.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ralph Adams Cram, *My Life in Architecture* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1936), p. 267.

⁴¹Ibid. p. 251.

⁴²*Architectural Record* (February 1924): 135.

The 1920s introduced sophisticated solutions for designing tall buildings. Most architects eschewed “vintage” skyscraper design, opting instead for newer formulas proffered by the era’s two diametrically-opposed camps. The spectrum of 1920s design theory placed the International avant-garde at one extreme (i.e., Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Saarinen) with the Classical Revivalists (i.e., Ecole des Beaux Art alumni) at the opposite pole. By mid-decade, a popular centrist position emerged, one which embraced the Jazz Age zeitgeist: Art Deco. The term “Art Deco” was not coined until 1966, derived from the seminal 1925 Paris exhibition of industrial arts or Musée des Arts Décoratifs. This eclectic style mixed Aztec, Egyptian, and Native American motifs with machine-age images of speed, electricity, and communication. New shiny materials, such as stainless steel, aluminum, and glass block conveyed a sense of urban glitz. This panache is perhaps best exemplified by the cheveroned crown of the 1930 Chrysler Building. The Art Deco was promulgated not only through skyscraper design, but also by the decorative arts, furniture, jewelry, and graphic design.

Two highly publicized and widely acclaimed 1920s projects in our nation’s capital fixed the point on this design spectrum which became the standard for 1930s federal architecture. Henry Bacon’s design for the Lincoln Memorial (1923), and Bertram Goodhue’s design for the National Academy of Science (1924) skewed subsequent federal commissions in favor of the Classical Revival. Goodhue’s design, however, was not a slavishly accurate replica of the Classical orders, in keeping with the Beaux Arts tradition. Instead, he “pioneered a modernized classical look.”⁴³ The rounded, sculptural quality of the column was replaced with a flattened pilaster, the cornice was eliminated altogether, and the plastic, carved ornament was exchanged for sleek bas relief motifs. This derivative style, known as “stripped-” or “starved classical,” is distinguished by its crisp lines and rigid geometry. Following Goodhue’s untimely death, the style was popularized by Paul Philippe Cret (1876-1945). While virtually unknown today, Cret topped the polls in the 1930s as America’s foremost architect. Operating almost exclusively within the federal realm, his commissions include: the Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library in Washington D.C. (1932) and the Federal Reserve banks in Washington D.C. (1937) and Philadelphia (1932). By 1930, the stripped classical style had become the hallmark not only of U.S. government architecture but of civic architecture world-wide.

Following the mass appropriation of federal funding in 1928, new post offices and court houses were proposed for cities and towns nationwide. Throughout the 1930s, the Association of Federal Architects (est. 1927) steadfastly endorsed the stripped classical style in their monthly publication, *The Federal Architect*. The magazine’s influential editor, Edwin Bateman Morris, as well as the staff of the Supervising Architect’s Office, “proclaimed their adherence to the classical, claiming it was either historically correct or uniquely expressive of democratic values.”⁴⁴ Ever conservative, Morris was nonetheless intrigued by designs emanating from the corporate sector.

“The germ of Modern Architecture is with us. Quarantining at the respective state borders had been of no avail. Spraying with strong solutions has failed. It is too strong to combat. Rather we must accept it. The problem of the Government architect and all other architects is to study this germ carefully and decide how much of it is malevolent and how much benevolent.”⁴⁵

⁴³Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco in the Nation’s Capital* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), p.19.

⁴⁴Craig, *The Federal Presence*, p.280.

⁴⁵“Can Modern Architecture Be Good?” *The Federal Architect*. (October 1930): p. 6.

Traditional government emblems such as eagles, the scales of justice, and so forth were rendered increasingly in the stylized Art Deco manner. The ensuing merger of stripped classical architecture with Art Deco ornament was tagged “Greco-Deco.”⁴⁶ This hybrid became synonymous with Depression-era federal architecture. Morris coined the phrase “Moderne Traditional” to describe this interesting stylistic union. Cram’s transitional design for the McCormack Building reflects this aesthetic milieu: it displays Art Deco massing, Stripped Classical cladding, and Greco-Deco ornament.

Unaccustomed to dealing with federal contracts, Cram felt confined by the Supervising Architect Office’s prescribed plans which dictated the building’s form, layout, and construction method. In his memoir, Cram largely disavowed himself of the final product.

“Here we were indeed appointed as architects, but shortly thereafter, were told that, on second thoughts, the Treasury Department would make all the plans and working drawings in its own construction office, while we could design and apply an exterior to the predetermined floor-plans and steel frame. In the end we did rather more than this, for we were called in to re-plan the floors given to the United States Courts and to design their finish, together with that of the main corridors. As for the exterior, while the office of the Supervising Architect was, through its personnel very considerate and disposed to make minor concessions in the disposition of the steel frame in order that a certain amount of orderliness might result, it was not a very happy arrangement, nor one that gave us the opportunity we had been looking for to enable us to show what we could do along a line so widely severed from our usual practice.”⁴⁷

Architectural critics were sympathetic to Cram’s constraints, if not slightly perplexed by the final product. Charles Loring’s 1933 review in the *American Architect* stands as the definitive apologia. Of the awkward juxtaposition of granite and limestone cladding, Loring wrote, “the public does not know of the early battles between budgets and lobbies.”⁴⁸ Struggling to place the building within an aesthetic context, he catalogs its “modern” qualities as: “lack of a projecting cornice, no visible roofs, few horizontal floor indications, and metal sash linked vertically by aluminum spandrels.”⁴⁹ Despite these 1920s indicators, the building’s granite-block veneer conveys the sense of load-bearing masonry construction. Loring notes, “there is little ‘structural significance,’ little of the ‘machine age,’ little of the ‘rebel arts’ and all that sort of thing in the grim masses of masonry which shield - but do not reveal - the steel supporting them.”⁵⁰ Although the terra cotta panels are Art Deco in feeling, their motifs have “a classic caste, suggestive of the Roman heredity of our laws.”⁵¹ Despite the fact that these contrary effects fail to jell into a cohesive whole, the McCormack Building’s sheer granite bulk is nonetheless an impressive wonder to behold. Loring describes the building as “a dazzling cliff, glimpsed unexpectedly across narrow streets.”⁵² With “the arrogant bleakness of a mesa” it “overtops the fussy little buildings below.”⁵³

⁴⁶Term created by historian James Goode.

⁴⁷Cram, *My Life in Architecture*. p. 257.

⁴⁸Charles G. Loring, “The Boston Federal Building,” *American Architect* (November 1933): p.15.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p.16.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Ibid.*, p.15.

⁵³*Ibid.*

3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation

The John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House meets the criteria for Landmark designation found in section four of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended, under the following criteria:

- B. *as a property identified prominently with an important aspect of the social and political history of the city, commonwealth, and nation.*** Built in 1933 at the height of the Depression, the McCormack Building housed the regional headquarters of the following federal departments: Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Judiciary, Labor, Navy, Post Office, State, Treasury, and War. As such, it is strongly associated with the administration of federal laws by which this State is governed. Moreover, as the Court House for both the Federal District Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, its history is identified with precedent-setting decisions involving New Deal legislation, civil rights, and judicial activism.
- D. *as a property representative of elements of architectural design embodying distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study.*** This unusual, transitional building, incorporating elements of the Stripped Classical and Art Deco styles, reflects the conservative, classical approach to government architecture endorsed and promulgated through the 1930s by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department. Its design represents a collaborative effort between the Supervising Architect's office and Cram & Ferguson, an architectural firm whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, and the nation.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

Tax exempt.

4.2 Current Ownership

The McCormack Post Office and Court House at 5 Post Office Square, Boston (GSA Building #0013ZZ) is owned by the United States of America and administered by the General Services Administration.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

Post Office Square is associated with one of Boston's earliest tan yards, that of Deacon Henry Bridgham. Bridgham, a leather dresser by trade, built his house in 1670 "off Milk Street, near a creek in which he and earlier tanners watered their leather."⁵⁴ In 1794, Jean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat, a French cook known as "Julien," purchased this First Period house and renovated it into a popular restaurant. In operation until 1815, Julien's was demolished in 1823, to make way for Boston's expanding commercial district.

The Great Fire of 1872 obliterated approximately 65 acres of Boston's commercial district. Under construction at the time of the conflagration, the granite walls of the U.S. Post Office and Sub-Treasury (predecessor of the McCormack Building) were credited with stemming the fire's expansion to the northeast. By the time it was extinguished, the fire had ravished Milk Street, from Devonshire to Oliver streets. In the wake of this disaster, the city committed four million dollars to capital improvements, including widening Water, Summer, Congress, Federal, Milk, Hawley, and Arch streets. The triangle of land in front of the new Post Office was cleared and the ensuing open space was named "Post Office Square." Mullet's masterpiece was finally completed in 1885, fourteen years after its cornerstone was laid.⁵⁵

Turn-of-the-century photographs reveal Post Office Square as an open triangle, paved with cobblestones. Bounded by Congress, Milk, and Pearl streets, this small triangle was framed by the U.S. Post Office & Sub-Treasury; Peabody & Stearns' 1874 Mutual Life Insurance Building (demolished in 1945); and the Atlantic National Bank (1923-30). In 1913, Peabody & Stearns' Angell Memorial Fountain was installed in the center of Post Office Square. Designed as a watering place for horses, this fountain was dedicated to George Thorndike Angell (1853-1909), founder of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA). The first headquarters of the MSPCA originally stood on nearby Milk Street. In 1957, this fountain was encircled by a park designed by Shurcliffe, Shurcliffe and Merrill.

The adjacent, 1.7-acre Leventhal Park (bounded by Congress, Milk, Pearl, and Franklin streets) was dedicated in 1991. This parcel was initially cleared following demolition of a 1950s city-owned garage (the former site of the Mutual Life Insurance Building). Funded and built by the Friends of Post Office Square in partnership with the City of Boston, this "garden for all seasons" conceals seven levels of below-grade parking. The Halvorsen Company, a Boston-based landscape-architecture firm, won this commission following a national design competition. The park provides light and air to an otherwise densely developed financial district.

⁵⁴Walter Muir Whitehill, *Boston: A Topographical History*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 16.

⁵⁵"The Nomad," *Boston Transcript*, 17 January 1927.

5.2 Current Planning Issues

The McCormack Post Office and Court House is owned by the U.S. Government and managed by the General Services Administration (GSA). Under Federal law (the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended), and in conjunction with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the GSA is obligated to protect and maintain the historic integrity of the McCormack Building, while it is vested in the United States of America.

The McCormack Building's federal tenants, primarily associated with the U.S. District Court system and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, are scheduled to relocate to Boston's new Federal Court House by August of 1998. According to Robert J. Dunfey, Jr., Regional Administrator for New England, the GSA currently does not plan to divest the McCormack building from the Federal inventory. In a letter to the Boston Landmarks Commission dated January 26, 1998, Dunfey states, "If, at any time in the future, GSA determines that the public interest would be served best by divesting the McCormack building from the Federal inventory, GSA will give notice to the appropriate historic preservation entities."⁵⁶

It is customary for GSA surplus property to be disposed of in accordance with the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (40 U.S.C. 471 et seq.). Applications are first solicited from public agencies (i.e. non-federal) with preference given to proposals involving public use. In the event that a public-use option is not forthcoming, the property is sold for "highest and best use," defined as: "most profitable likely use, within the realm of reasonable probability, to which real and related personal property can be put or adapted, and for which there is a current market."⁵⁷

In 1995, Ann Beha and Associates completed a Historic Structures Report (HSR) for the McCormack Post Office and Court House. The HSR identified all exterior and interior features, materials, and elements. The building's interior spaces were ranked in terms of architectural significance, with the designation "Zone One" indicating the highest priority. The GSA is obligated to protect Zone One areas which include the lobby, the original courtrooms and the law library. Prior to divesting a property from the Federal inventory, it is customary for the GSA to implement deed restrictions for the property's exterior features and its Zone One interior spaces as part of the conveyance.

As a federal property, the McCormack Post Office and Court House is subject to a claim of exemption from regulation by the Boston Landmarks Commission under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, despite the fact that the enabling statute allows the Commission to designate landmarks "however owned." To avoid such a claim, if voted by the Boston Landmarks Commission and approved by the Mayor and City Council, recognition of this property as a Boston Landmark could become effective immediately; the regulatory provisions of designation could become effective immediately upon the property's conveyance out of federal ownership or control.

⁵⁶Robert J. Dunfey, Jr., GSA Regional Administrator for New England, to Boston Landmarks Commission, 26 January 1998, BLC files.

⁵⁷GSA Form 1241-D (Rev. 7-77)

5.4 Current Zoning

As a federal property, the McCormack Post Office and Court House is exempt from city zoning regulations. The building is located within a "B-10" or "General Business" area where development is not restricted in terms of height and a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of ten (10) is allowed.

Under the draft 1992 Financial District zoning amendment (the proposed Article 47 of the Boston Zoning Code), the McCormack Building is located within the "Congress Street Medium Density Area" where development is limited to 125-155 feet in height and a maximum FAR of eight (8) to ten (10) are allowed.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission:

A. Individual Landmark Designation

Surveyed by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1980 as part of the *Central Business District Preservation Study*, the John W. McCormack U.S. Post Office & Courthouse was evaluated as a building “of significance to the City of Boston.” Additional research on the proceedings of the U.S. District Court and First Circuit Court of Appeals, coupled with a stronger appreciation of Boston’s rare surviving Art Deco structures, indicates this building is also significant at the State and Regional level. In light of these factors, the McCormack Building demonstrates sufficient importance to merit individual Landmark designation under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. Designation of the McCormack Building shall correspond to Assessor’s parcel 3881, ward 3, and shall address the following exterior elements hereinafter referred to as the “**Specified Exterior Features:**”

- (1.) all exterior elevations (including the central light court); and
- (2.) the roof.

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. Landmark District Designation

The Commission’s enabling legislation precludes the creation of Landmark districts in the central city.

D. Preservation Restriction

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

E. Preservation Plan

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

F. National Register Listing

The McCormack Building received an official “Determination of Eligibility” by the Secretary of the Interior on November 14, 1985.

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.

B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation

Without Landmark designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Exterior Features, or extend guidance to present and future owners.

C. Landmark District Designation

Not applicable.

D. Preservation Restriction

Chapter 666 of the M.G.L. 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 non-profit organization capable of acquiring interests in land and 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. Tax incentives may be available for qualified donors.

E. Preservation Plan

A preservation plan would investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development.

F. National Register

National Register listing provides limited protection from adverse impacts caused by federal, federally-licensed or federally-assisted activities. Similar protection from state-sponsored projects is achieved by the concurrent listing of all National Register properties on the State Register of Historic Places under Chapter 254 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends the John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House as described in Section 6.1A be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended. The boundaries shall correspond to ward 3, parcel 3881 as depicted on the City of Boston Assessor's map. The standards and criteria for administering the regulatory functions provided for in Chapter 772 are attached.

As a federal property, the McCormack Post Office and Court House is subject to a claim of exemption from regulation by the Boston Landmarks Commission under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, despite the fact that the enabling statute allows the Commission to designate landmarks "however owned." To avoid such a claim, staff recommends that if voted by the Boston Landmarks Commission and approved by the Mayor and City Council, recognition of this property as a Boston Landmark could become effective immediately; the regulatory provisions of designation could become effective immediately upon the property's conveyance out of federal ownership or control.

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 established thus note those features which must be conserved 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 insure 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.

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 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 ones that are common to all landmark designations (building exteriors, building interiors, landscape features and archeological sites).
- ◆ **Section 9.0** - Those specific ones 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 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 into:

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

1. Activities associated with routine maintenance, including such items as: Housekeeping, pruning, fertilizing, mulching, etc.
2. Routine activities associated with seasonal installations which do not result in any permanent alterations or attached fixtures.

B. Activities which may be determined by the Executive Director to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption:

1. Ordinary maintenance and repair involving no change in design, material, color and outward appearance, including such items as: Major cleaning programs (including chemical surface cleaning), repainting, planting or removal of limited number of trees or shrubs, major vegetation management.
2. In-kind replacement or repair.

C. Activities requiring Landmarks Commission review:

Any reconstruction, restoration, replacement, alteration or demolition (This includes but is not limited to surface treatments, fixtures and ornaments) such as: New construction of any type; removal of existing features or element; any alteration involving change in design, material color, location or outward appearance; major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, 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 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.
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 archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved.

The General Standards and Criteria has been financed in part with funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of State Michael Joseph Connolly, Chairman.

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9.0 EXTERIORS - SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House

5 Post Office Square, Boston, Massachusetts

9.1 Introduction

1. 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.
2. The intent of these standards and criteria is to preserve the overall character and appearance of the McCormack Building including its exterior form, its mass, and its richness of detail.
3. The standards and criteria apply only to physical changes to Specified Exterior Features; they do not pertain to usage issues or commercial activities.
4. The standards and criteria acknowledge that there will be changes to the exterior of the building and are intended to make the changes sensitive to the architectural character of the building.
5. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed:
 - 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.
6. All **Exterior Elevations (including the central light court)** and the **Roof** are subject to the terms of the exterior guidelines herein stated.
7. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following:

9.2 Exterior Walls

A. General

1. New openings shall not be allowed.
2. Original existing openings shall not be filled or changed in size.
3. Exposed conduit shall not be allowed on any elevation.
4. The central light court shall not be in-filled.

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 masonry materials, features, details and ornamentation of the building, such as: the granite veneer, limestone veneer, marble veneer, brick, glazed terra cotta tile, limestone grille, limestone relief panels, granite water table, polished and dressed surfaces, tooled reveals, bonding patterns, joint sizes, and mortar color and composition 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.
7. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints.
8. Use of mechanical saws and hammers shall not be allowed.
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 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 shall not be permitted.** Doing so changes the visual quality of the material and accelerates deterioration.

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.

C. Wood

Not Applicable.

D. Architectural Metals (Cast Iron, Steel, Pressed Tin, Copper, Aluminum and Zinc)

1. All metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation of the building, such as: aluminum window frames and sashes, aluminum spandrels, aluminum screens, steel frame, copper flashing, bronze grills, aluminum doors, hardware, and finishes 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. All window elements, details, and features [functional and decorative] of the building, such as: the predominant 3/3 sash configuration, the first- and second-story tripartite windows, frames, transoms, glazing, sills, and natural finishes shall be preserved.
2. The original window design and arrangement of window openings shall be retained.
3. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.
4. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
8. Vinyl or vinyl-clad replacement sash shall not be allowed.
9. Simulated muntins, including snap-in, surface-applied, or between-glass grids shall not be allowed.
10. Tinted or reflective-coated glass (i.e.: low "e") shall not be allowed.
11. Only clear single-paned glass should be used in multi-light windows since insulating glass in multi-light windows will exaggerate the width of the muntins.

9.4 Storefronts

Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.3, 9.5, 9.11, 9.12 and 9.14 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. In general, the Commission discourages the creation of storefronts, although these proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. The design of new storefronts shall reinforce the architectural character of the building.
3. The materials of new storefronts shall be consistent with the materials specific to the building, such as: aluminum, glass, bronze, and terra cotta.
4. 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.

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, 9.12 and 9.14 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. All entrance elements, materials, details and features [functional and decorative] of the building that need to be preserved, such as: the glazed aluminum doors, polished marble surrounds, decorative over-doors, paneled wood garage doors, paint colors and finishes shall be preserved.
2. No original exterior doors survive. Replacement doors should match the original in design, material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
3. The original arrangement of door openings shall be retained.
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. Only glazed aluminum doors of appropriate design, material and assembly shall be allowed.
11. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.
12. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.
13. Entry lighting shall be located in traditional locations (e.g., attached to the side panels of the entrance.).
14. Light fixtures shall not be affixed to the face of the building.
15. 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.
16. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels shall be flush mounted inside the recess of the entrance and not on the face of the building.
17. 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 Vestibules and Stoops

Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C and D regarding treatment of materials and features; and Sections 9.5, 9.8, 9.10, 9.12, 9.13 and 9.14 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. All vestibule and stoop materials, elements, details and features [functional and decorative] of the building such as: the granite steps, bronze railings, pilasters, carvings and finishes shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing vestibule and stoop 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 vestibule and stoop 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 vestibule and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

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

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

1. All ironwork materials, elements, details and features [functional and decorative] such as: the decorative bronze grills, aluminum grill frames, and finishes 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. Balconies shall not be allowed.
8. Fixed diagonal fire stairways shall not be allowed.
9. The installation of security grilles may be allowed.
10. Window grilles shall be mounted within the window reveal and secured into the mortar joints rather into the masonry or onto the face of the building.
11. Window grilles shall have pierced horizontal rails or butt-welded joints.

12. Overlapping welded joints shall not be allowed.
13. Window grilles shall not project beyond the face of the building.
14. 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 9.10 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. All roof elements and features [functional and decorative], such as: the terra cotta and limestone parapets, the buttress caps, copings, and flashing 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.
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. 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. In addition, skylights shall be located so that they are not visible from a public way.

9.9 Roof Projections
(includes Penthouses, Roof Decks, Mechanical or Electrical Equipment, Satellite Dishes, Antennas and other Communication Devices)

Refer to Sections 9.8 and 9.10 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 shall be selected where the roof projection 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 roof projection is not seen from the street or adjacent buildings.
 - c. Exterior treatment shall related 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 Additions

Due to the McCormack Building's prominent massing and total parcel coverage, no new additions shall be allowed.

9.11 Signs, Marquees and Awnings

Refer to Sections 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.12 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. Signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in structures adapted for purposes different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.
2. 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.
3. New signs shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.

4. New signs shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.
5. The design and material of new signs should reinforce the architectural character of the building.
6. Signs applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building.
7. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.
8. 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.
9. Lighting of signs shall be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.
10. Back-lit or plastic signs shall not be allowed on the exterior of the building.
11. Awnings and marquees shall not be allowed.

9.12 Exterior Lighting

Refer to Section 9.2 D regarding treatment of materials and features. Refer to Sections 9.5, 9.11 and 9.13 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, the original bronze 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. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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 recommended.

9.13 Landscape/Building Site

Refer to Sections 9.2 B, C, and D regarding treatment of materials and features. Refer to Sections 9.10, 9.12, 9.14 and 9.15 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later contributing site features that enhance the landmark property.
2. New additions/alterations to the site (such as: parking lots, loading docks, ramps, etc.) shall be as unobtrusive as possible and preserve any original or later contributing site features.
3. Removal of non-historic site features from the existing site is encouraged.
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.

9.14 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, 9.10, 9.12 and 9.13 for additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

1. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:
 - a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
 - b. Assess the property's existing and required level of accessibility;
 - c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.
2. Because of the complex nature of accessibility the commission will review proposals on a case by case bases. The commission recommends consulting the following document which is available from the commission office:

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; **Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible"** by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

9.15 Archeology

Not applicable.

The Exteriors - Specific Standards and Criteria has been financed in part with funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of State Michael Joseph Connolly, Chairman.

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Appendix A

John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House
Select Floor Plans - March 1995

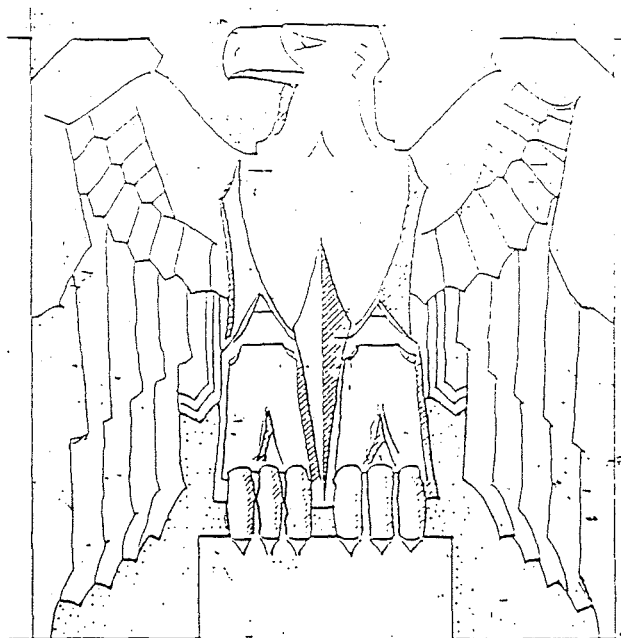
courtesy: Ann Beha Associates
33 Kingston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

JOHN W. McCORMACK POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

GSA BUILDING # 0013ZZ

HISTORIC BUILDING PRESERVATION PLAN



STAGE I:	BUILDING CLASSIFICATION
STAGE II:	BUILDING ZONING
STAGE III:	ELEMENT ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
33 KINGSTON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02111

MARCH 1995

**JOHN W. MCCORMACK POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE
BOSTON, MA
#MA0013ZZ**

**APPENDIX A:
ZONE IDENTIFICATION FLOOR PLANS**

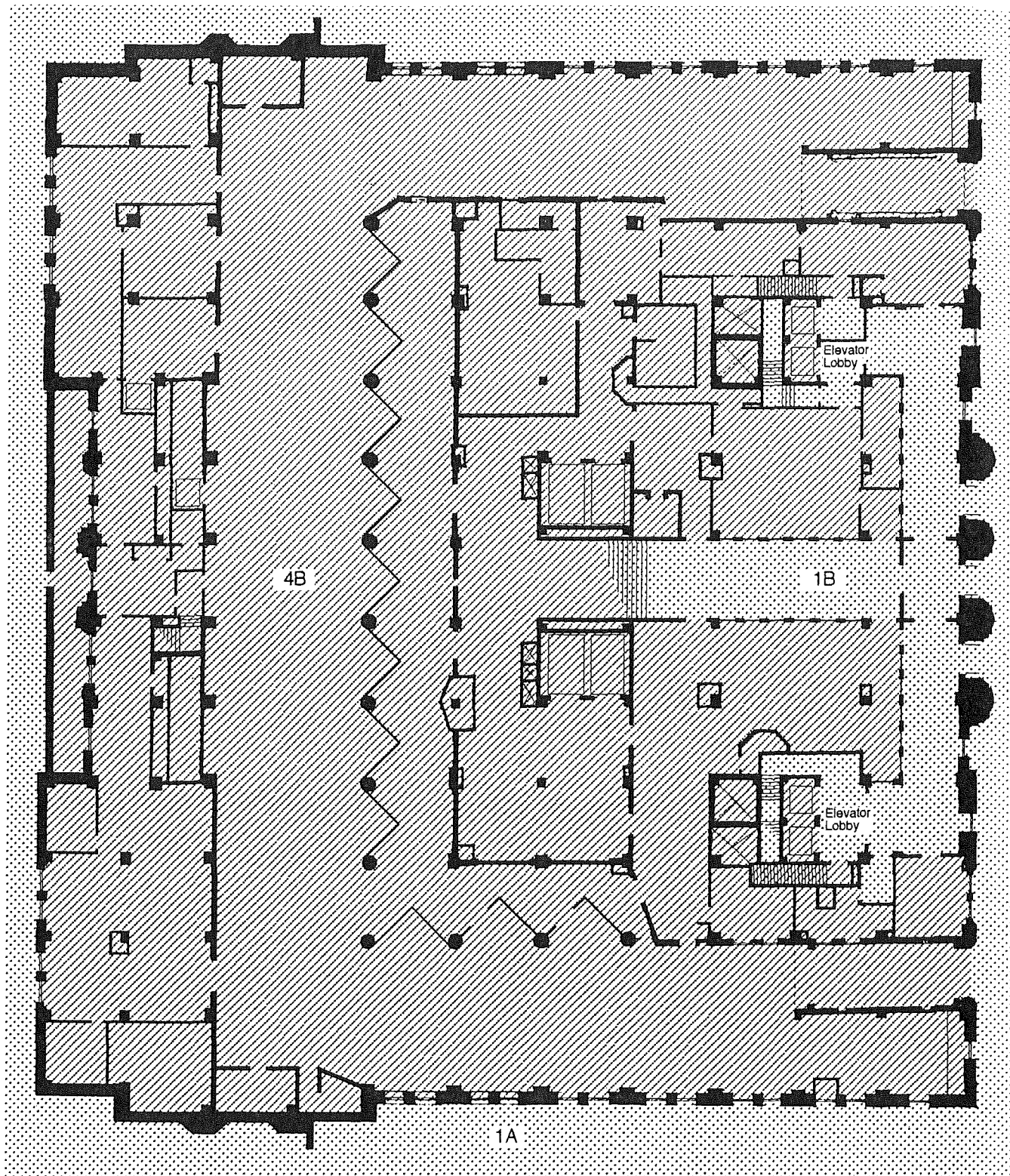
PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET

DEVONSHIRE STREET

POST OFFICE SQUARE



ZONES

1 [diagonal lines] 2 [cross-hatch] 3 [diagonal lines] 4 [diagonal lines] 6 [diagonal lines]

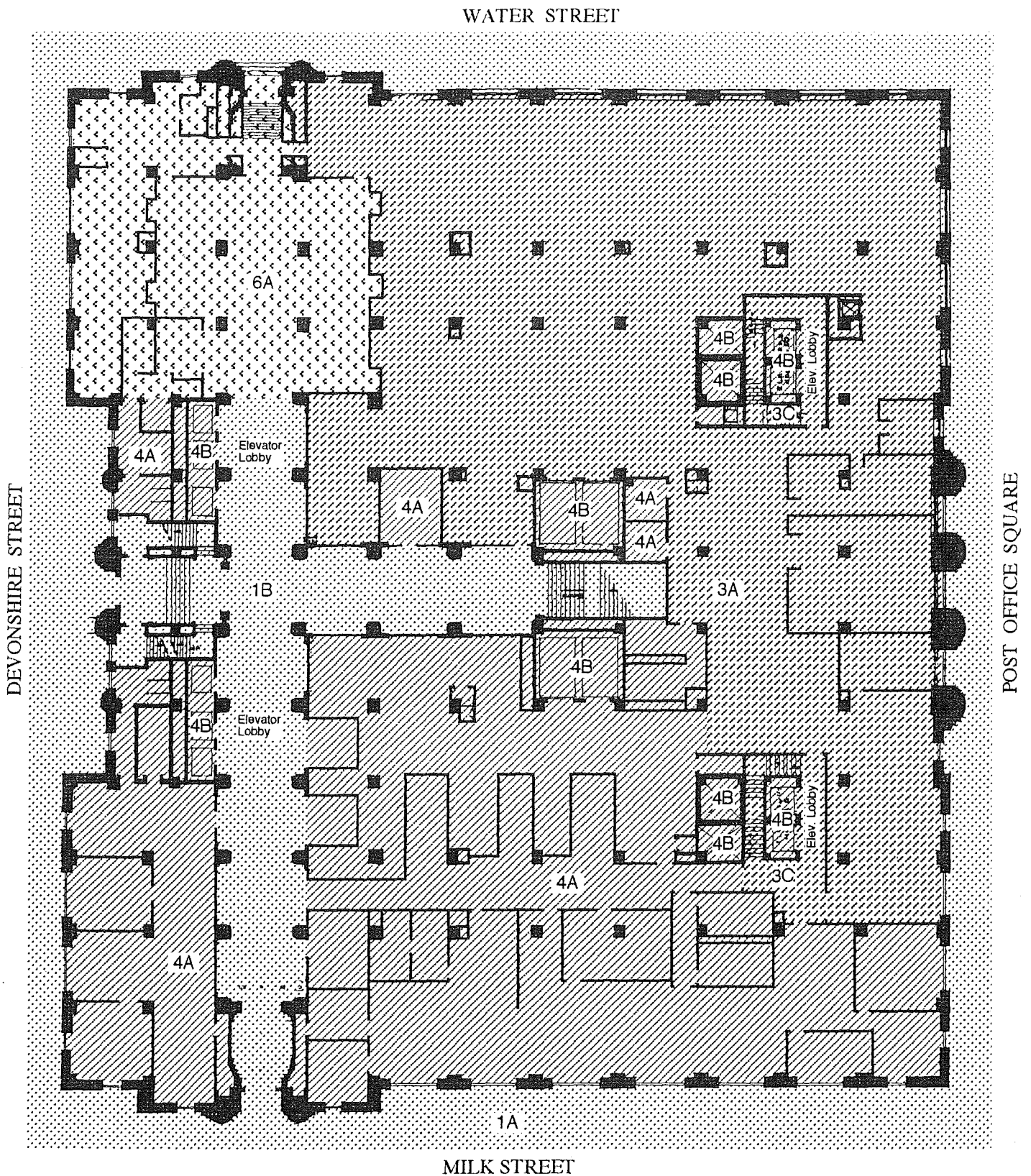


0' 8' 16' 32'

BASEMENT PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



ZONES

1 2 3 4 6



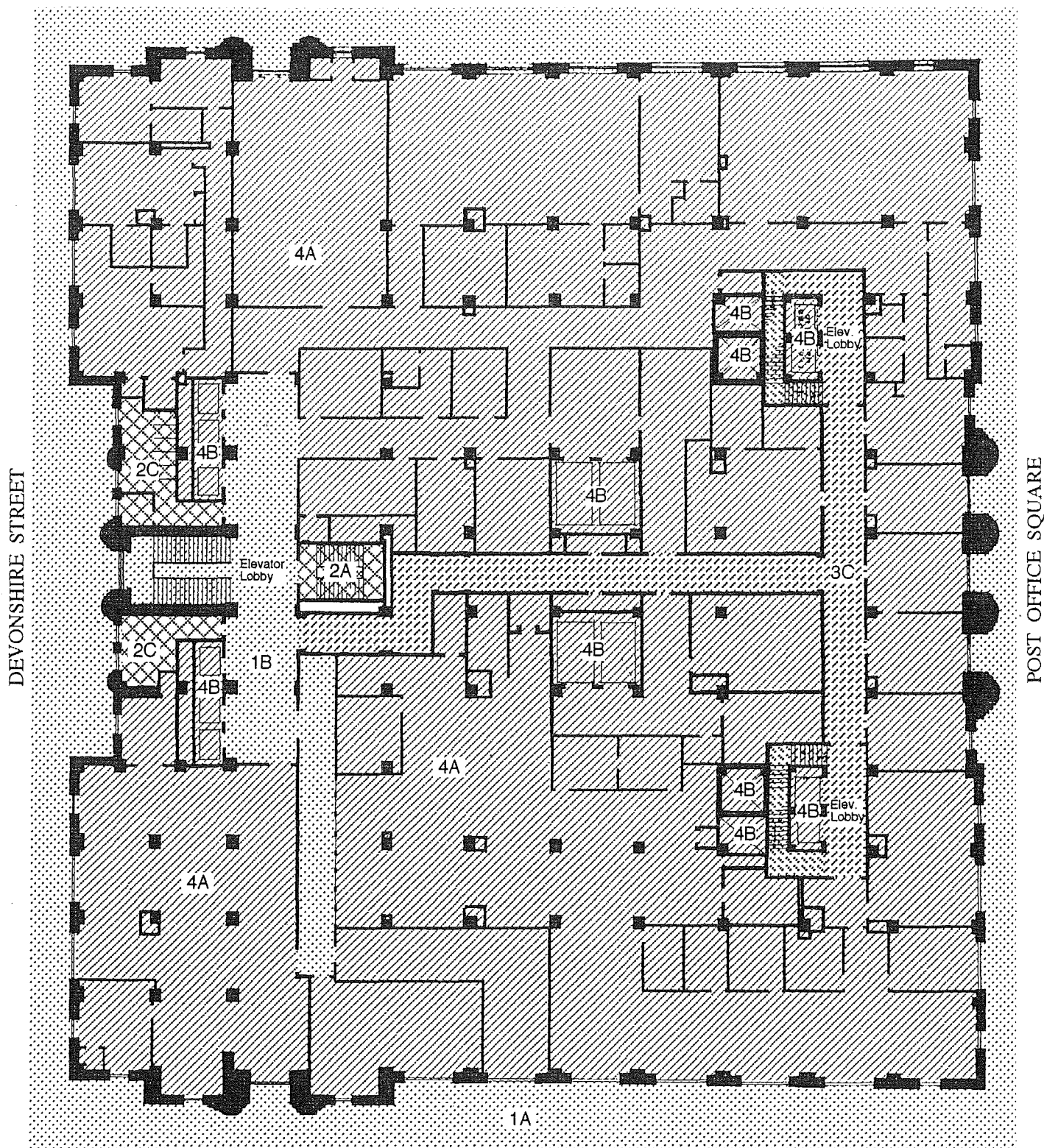
0' 8' 16' 32'

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
 JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

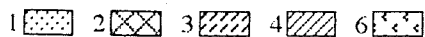
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET



MILK STREET

ZONES

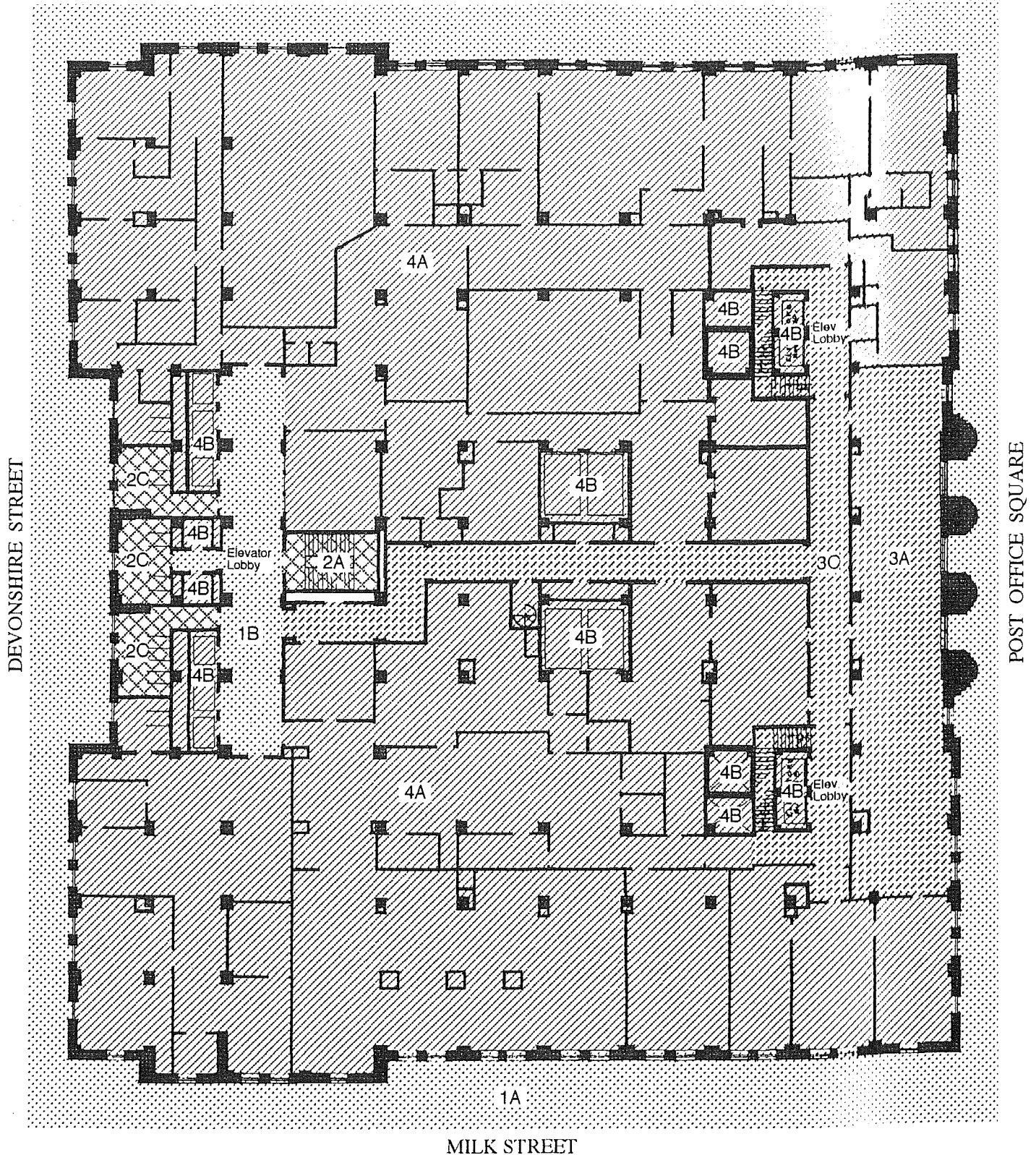


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET



ZONES

1 [diagonal lines] 2 [cross-hatch] 3 [horizontal lines] 4 [vertical lines] 6 [dots]



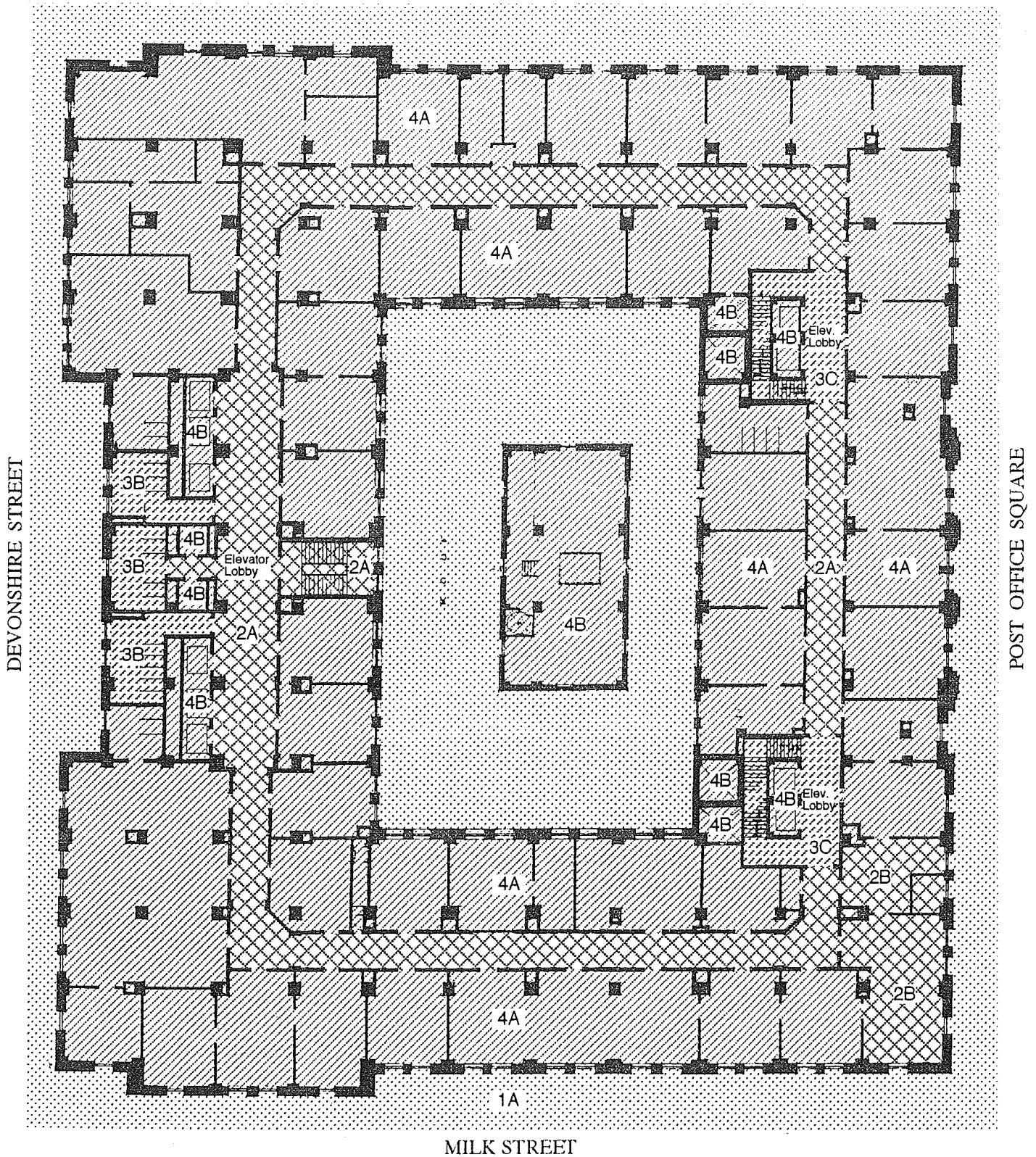
0' 8' 16' 32'

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET



ZONES

1 2 3 4 6

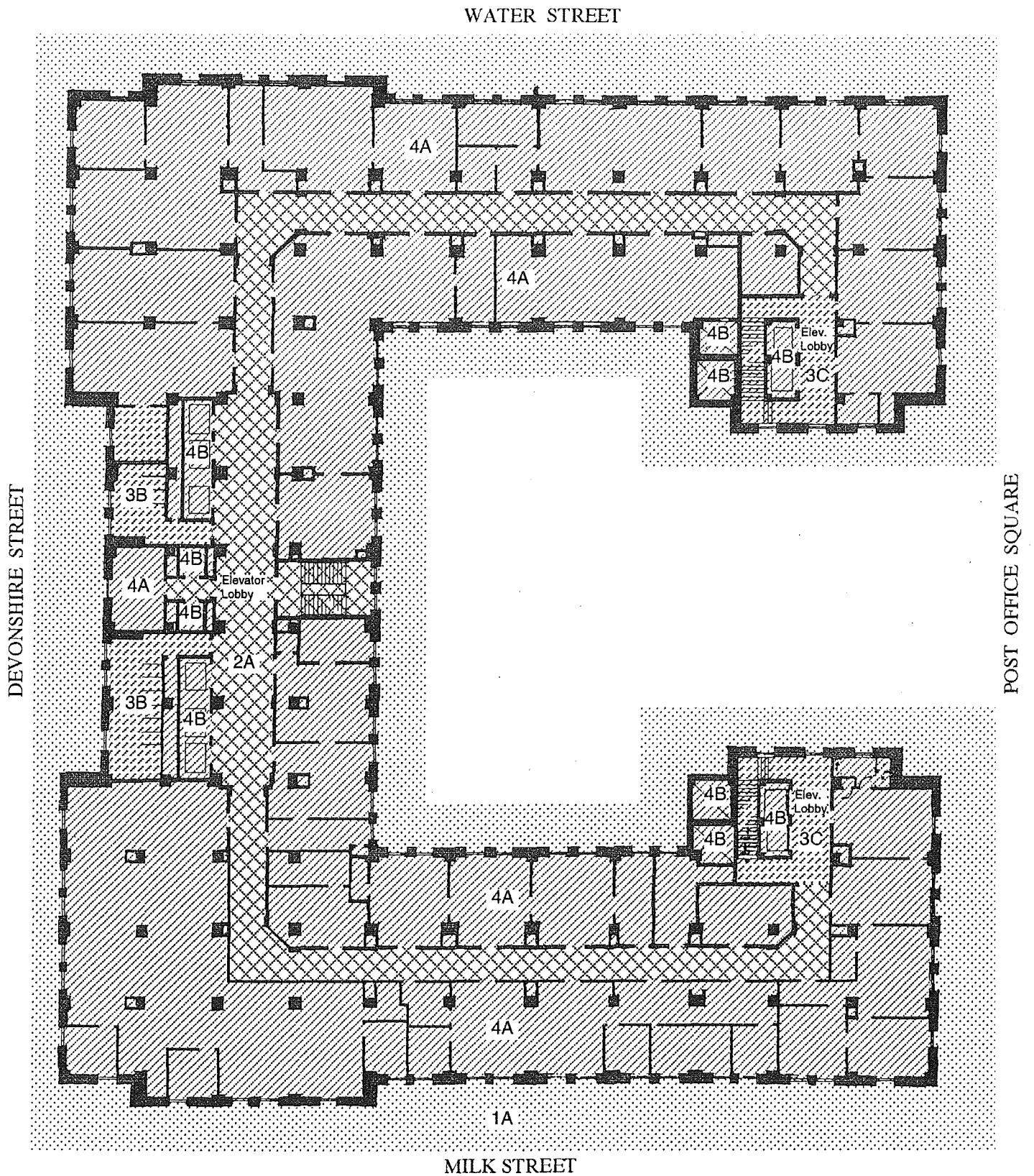


0' 8' 16' 32'

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

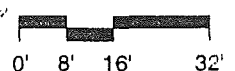
PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



ZONES

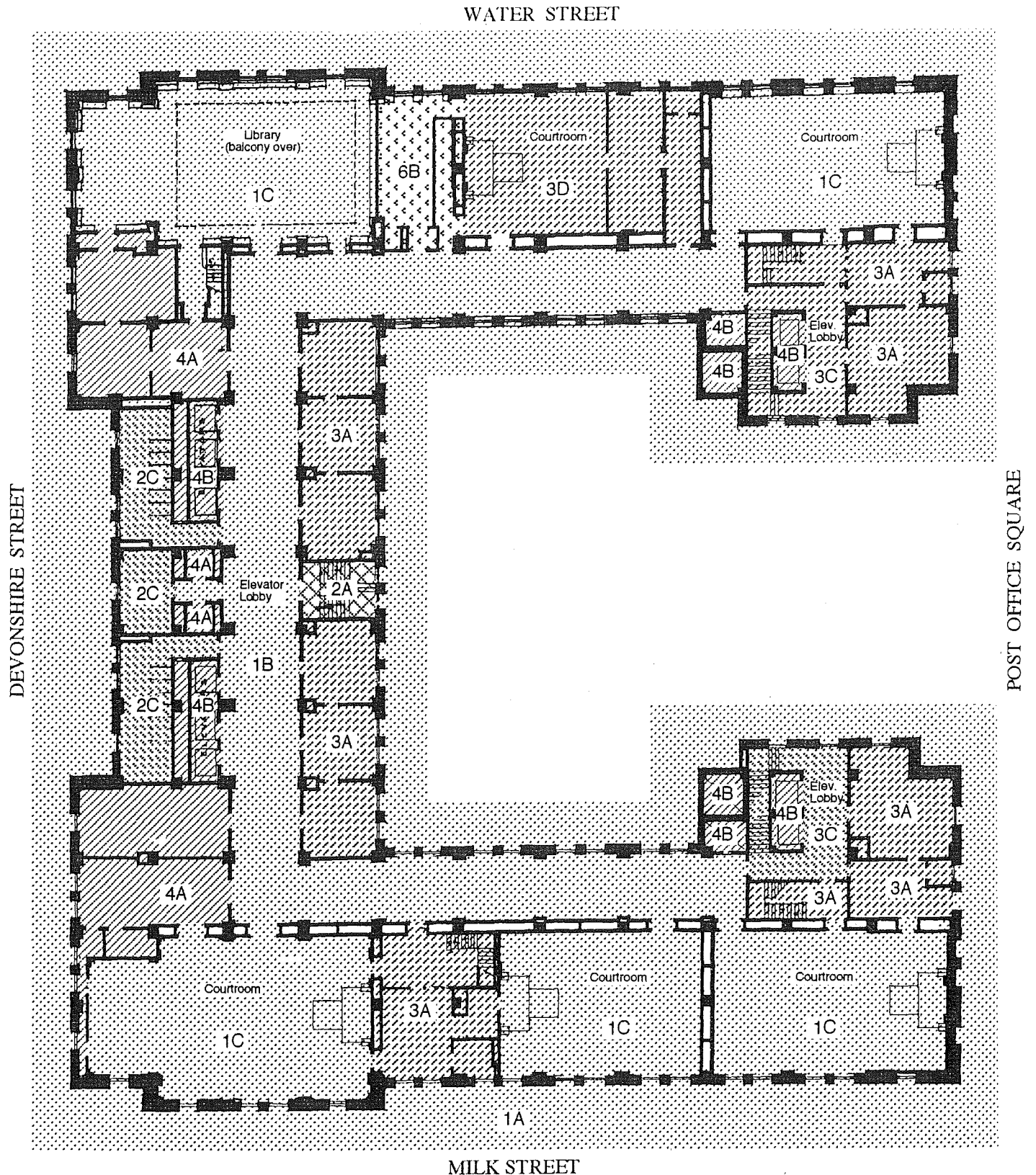
1 [stippled] 2 [cross-hatch] 3 [diagonal lines] 4 [horizontal lines] 6 [square-in-square]



FIFTH FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



ZONES

1 [dots] 2 [cross-hatch] 3 [diagonal lines] 4 [horizontal lines] 6 [vertical lines]



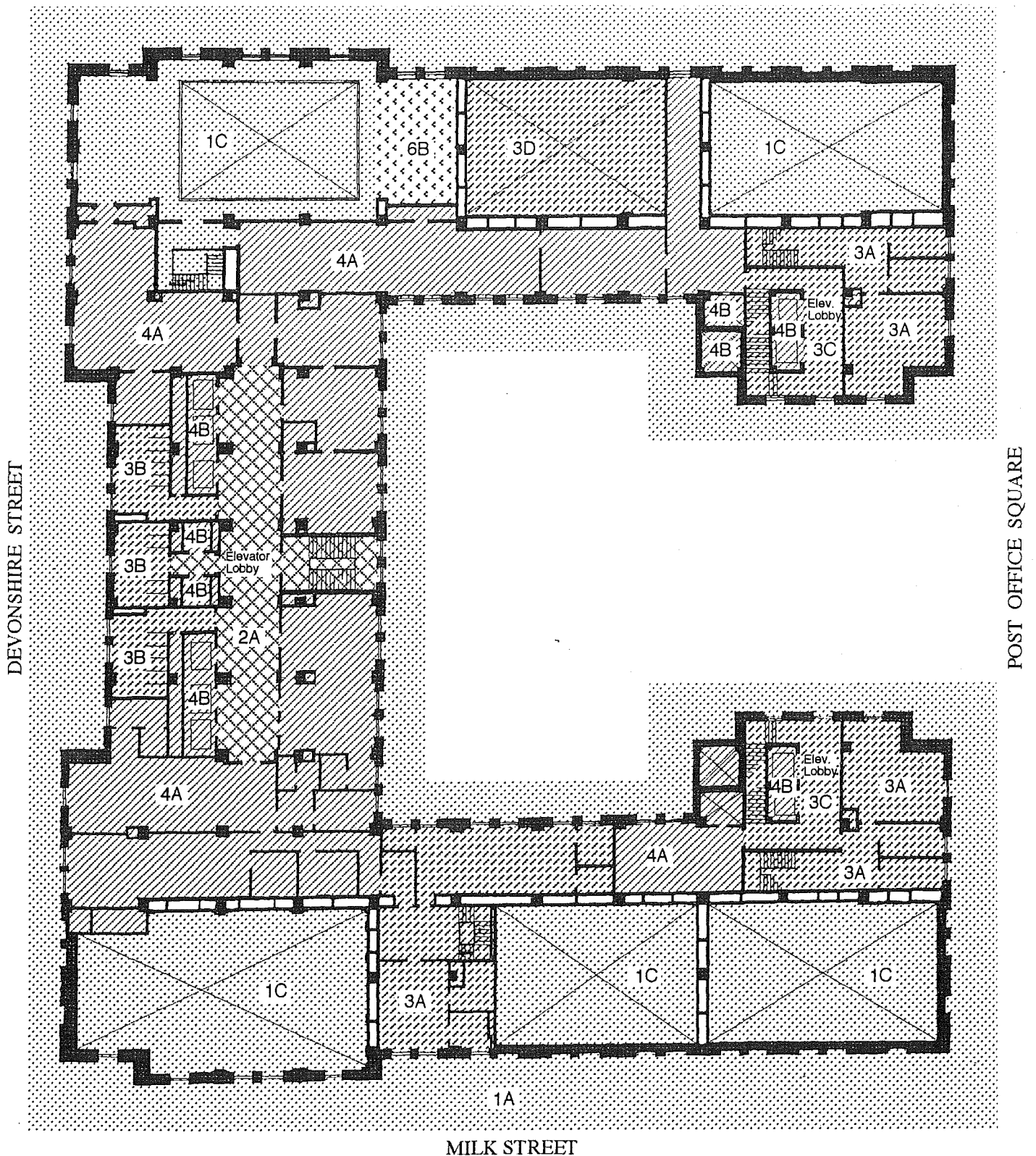
0' 8' 16' 32'

TWELFTH FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET



ZONES

1 2 3 4 6



0' 8' 16' 32'

THIRTEENTH FLOOR PLAN

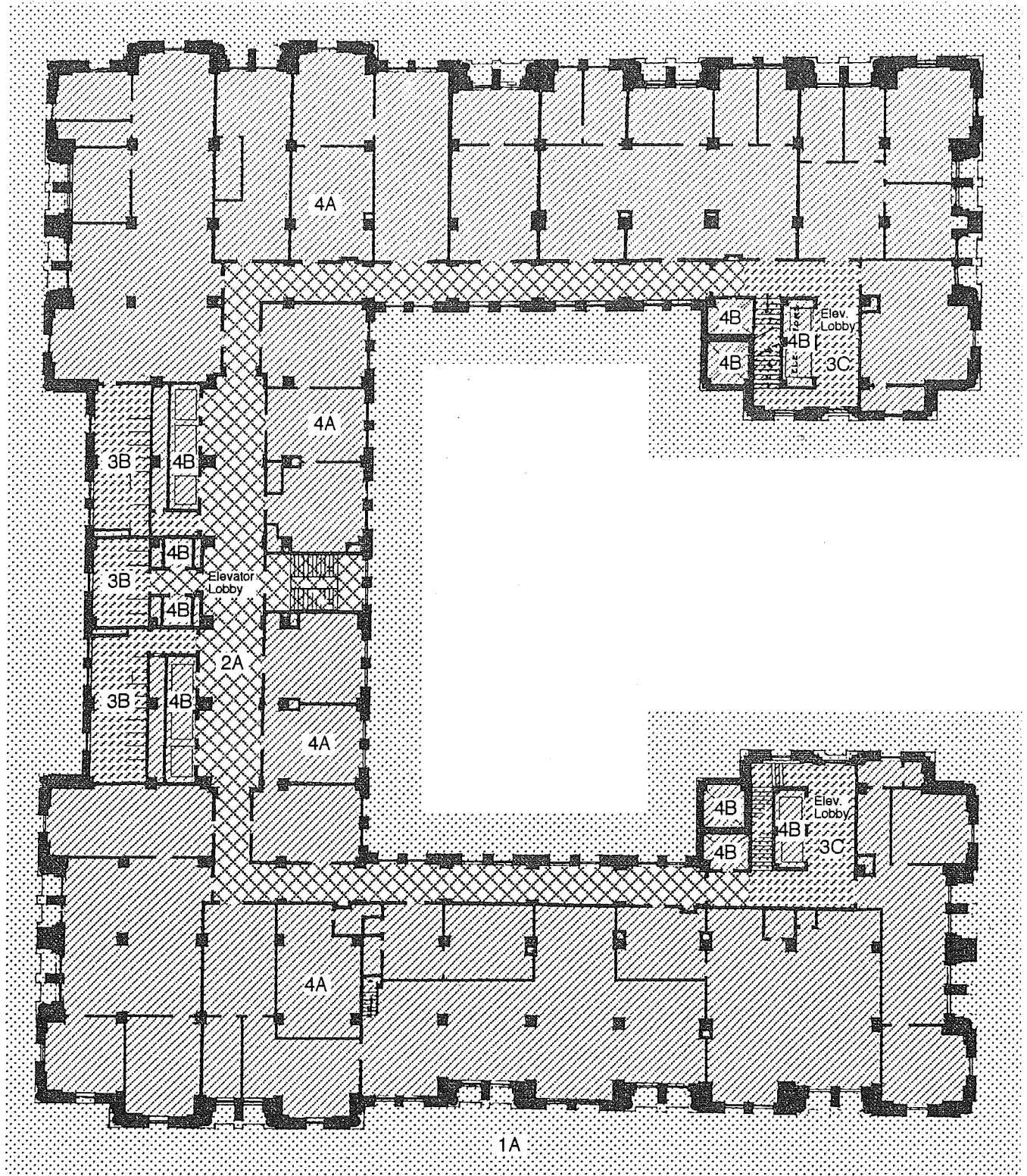
PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET

DEVONSHIRE STREET

POST OFFICE SQUARE



ZONES

1 [diagonal lines] 2 [cross-hatch] 3 [diagonal lines] 4 [diagonal lines] 6 [diagonal lines]

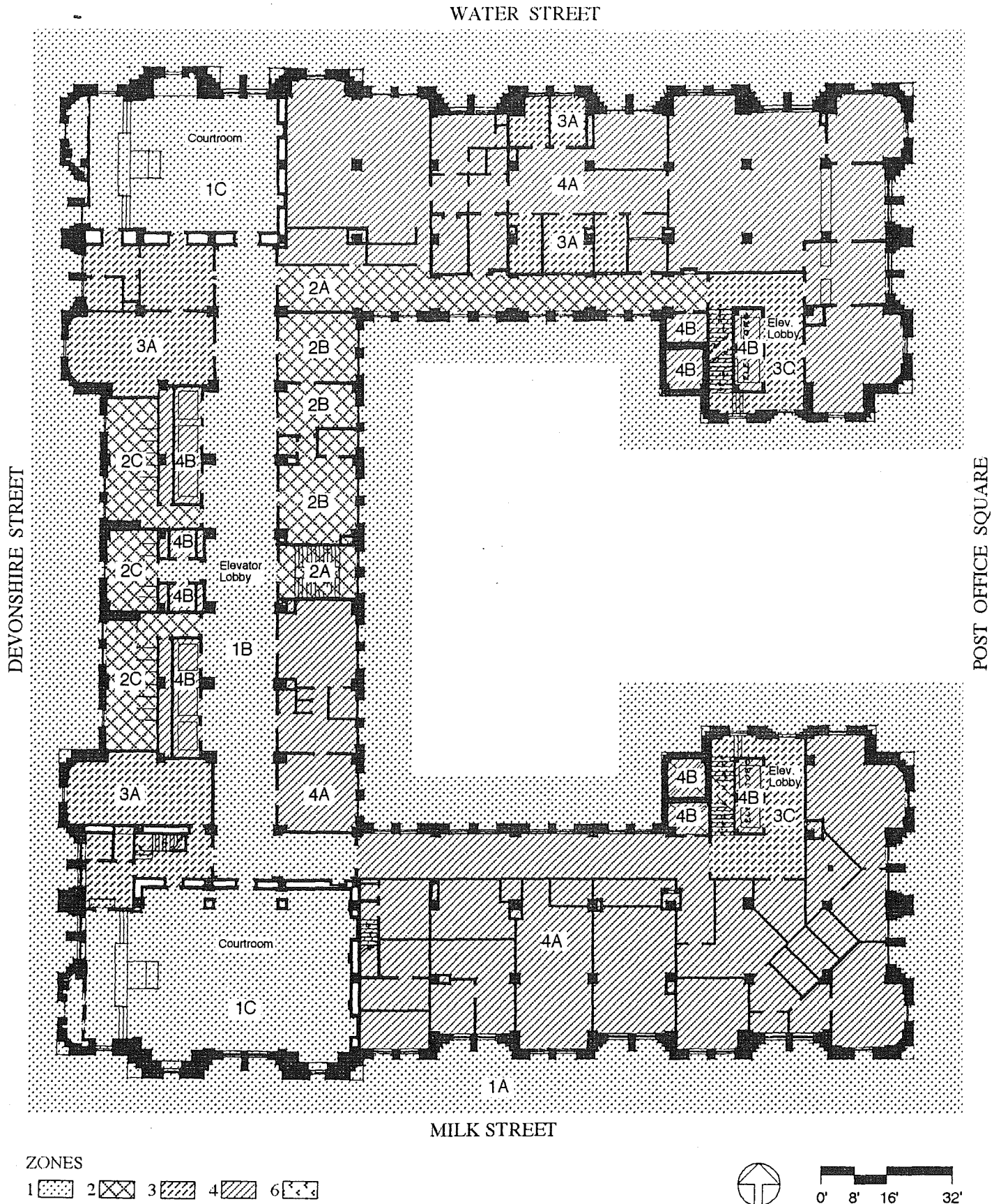


0' 8' 16' 32'

FOURTEENTH FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

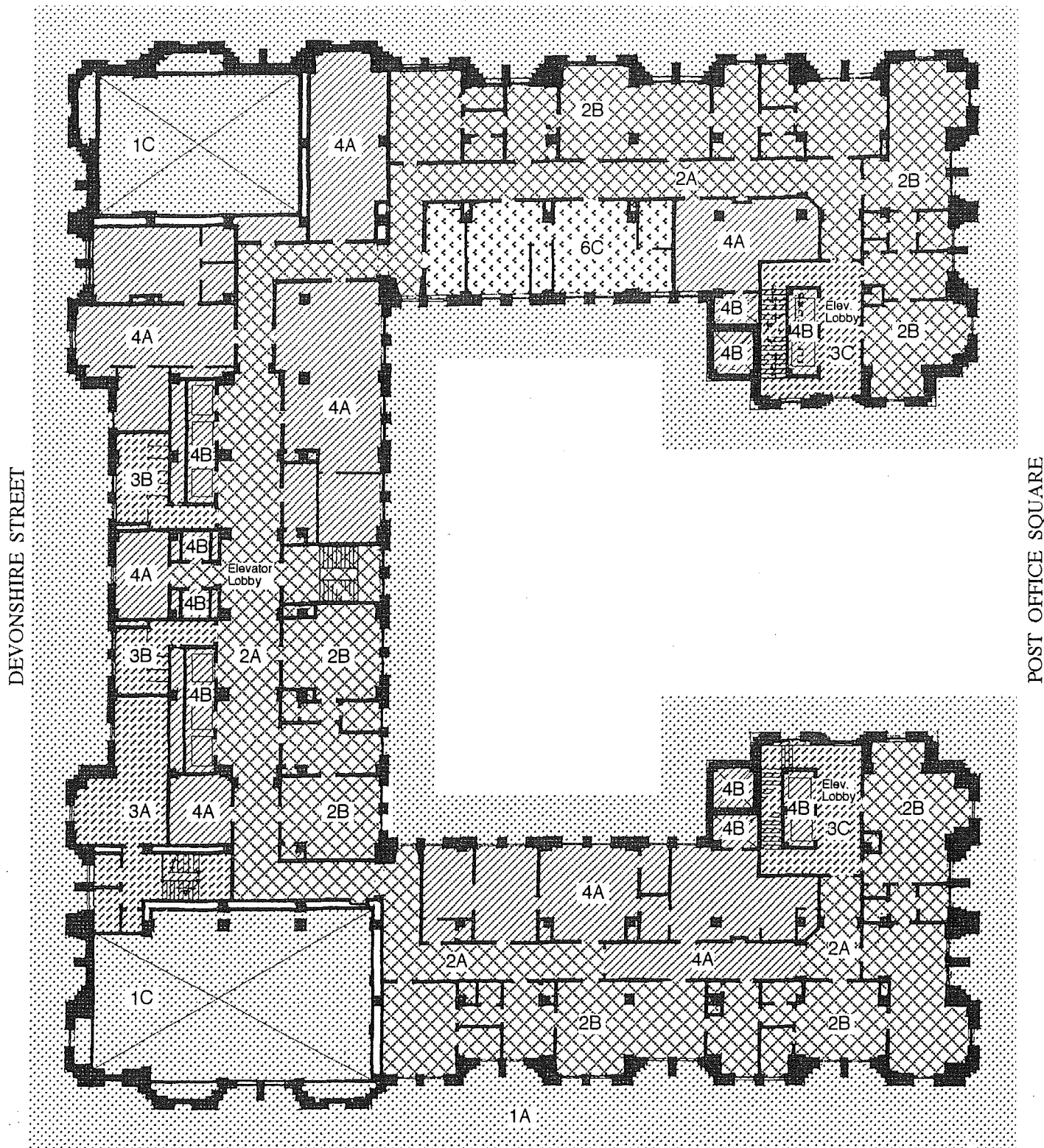
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

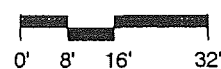
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET



ZONES

1 2 3 4 6



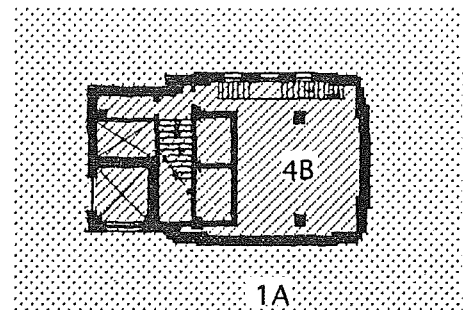
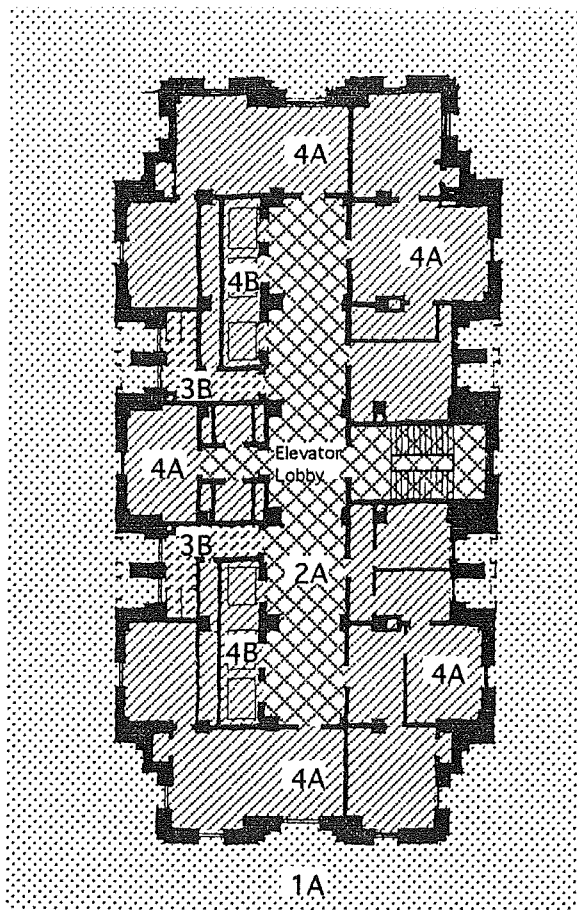
SIXTEENTH FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
 JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

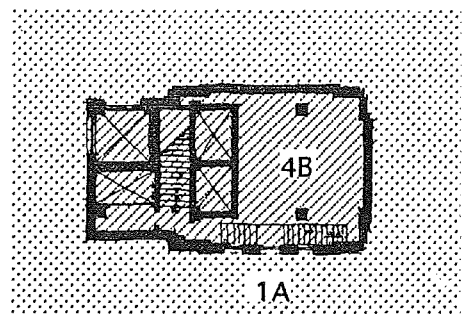
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER STREET

DEVONSHIRE STREET

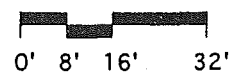
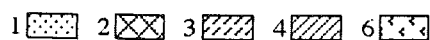


POST OFFICE SQUARE



MILK STREET

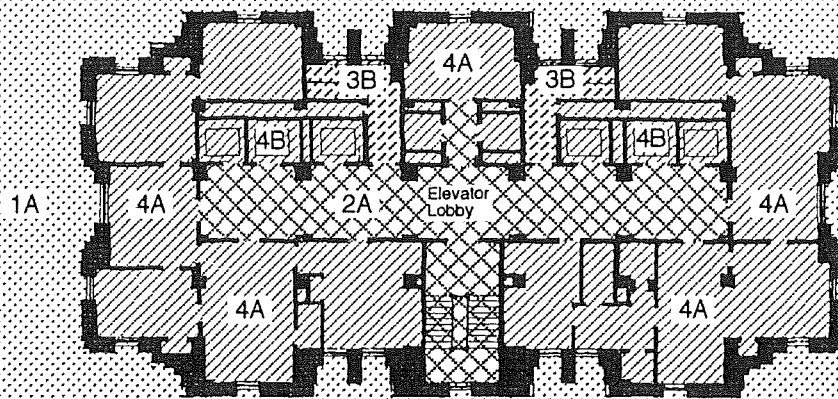
ZONES



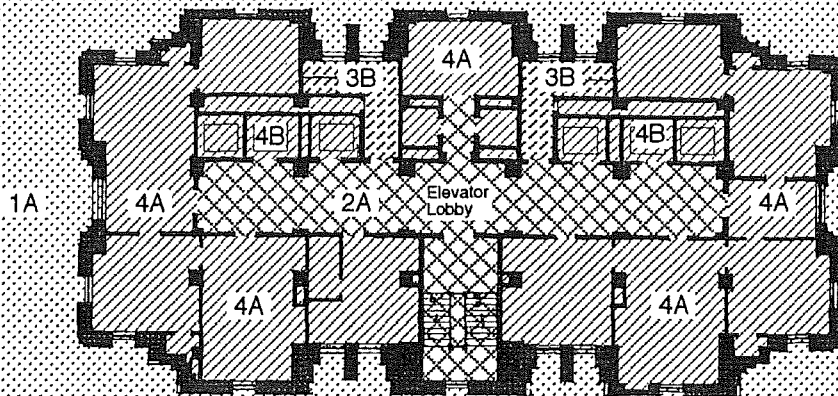
SEVENTEENTH FLOOR PLAN

PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

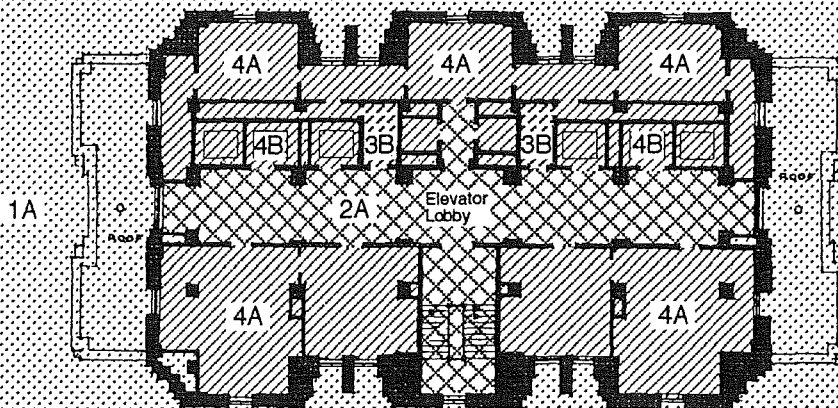
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



EIGHTEENTH FLOOR PLAN

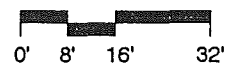


NINETEENTH FLOOR PLAN



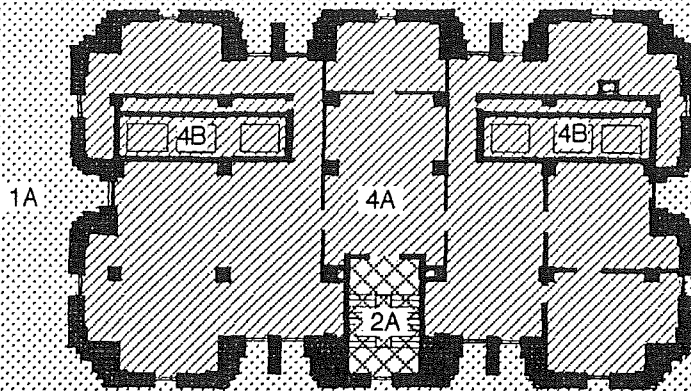
TWENTIETH FLOOR PLAN

ZONES

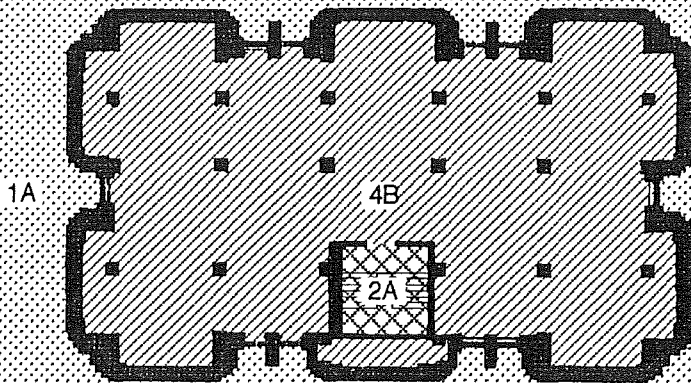


PRESERVATION ZONES
JOHN W. McCORMACK P.O. & C.H.
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

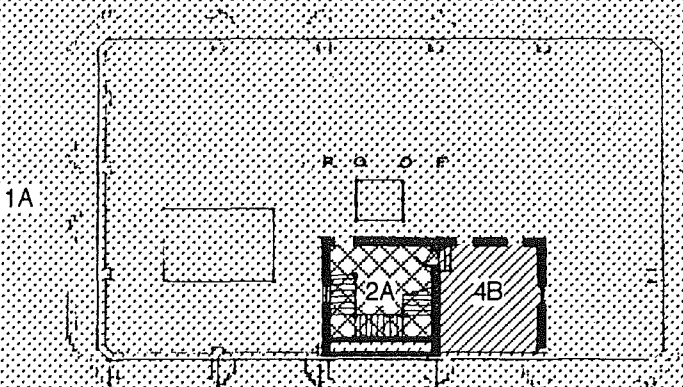
ANN BEHA ASSOCIATES
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



TWENTY-FIRST FLOOR PLAN

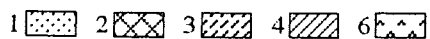


TWENTY-SECOND FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN

ZONES



CITY OF BOSTON
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ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Lorraine M. Downey, Director

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The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission gratefully acknowledges the assistance of: Candace Jenkins, Architectural Historian; Lorna Condon, Archivist, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; and Janice Chadbourne, Head Librarian, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library.