

THE SEARS BUILDING



Boston Landmarks Commission
Environment Department
City of Boston

Report of the Boston Landmarks Commission
on the Potential Designation of the
SEARS ROEBUCK & CO MAIL ORDER HOUSE
as a

Landmark Under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as Amended

Approved: Judith B. McDermott (d) 9-5-89
(Executive Secretary) (Date)

Accepted: Alan Schatz 9-5-89
(Chairman) (Date)

Gratitude is expressed to Hallie Pinta Smith for her work in researching and writing this report.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Location of the Property
- 2.0 Description
- 3.0 Significance
- 4.0 Economic Status
- 5.0 Planning Context
- 6.0 Alternative Approaches
- 7.0 Recommendations
- 8.0 General Standards and Criteria
- 9.0 Specific Standards and Criteria
- 10.0 Bibliography

1.0 LOCATION OF THE PROPERTY

1.1 Address and Assessor's Parcel Number:

The address of the Sears Roebuck & Co Mail Order House is 309 Park Drive, and 201 Brookline Avenue. It is in Ward 21, assessor's parcel number 77. The Sears customer parking lot bordered by Brookline Avenue, Park Drive, and the Fenway is in Ward 4, parcel 1994-1.

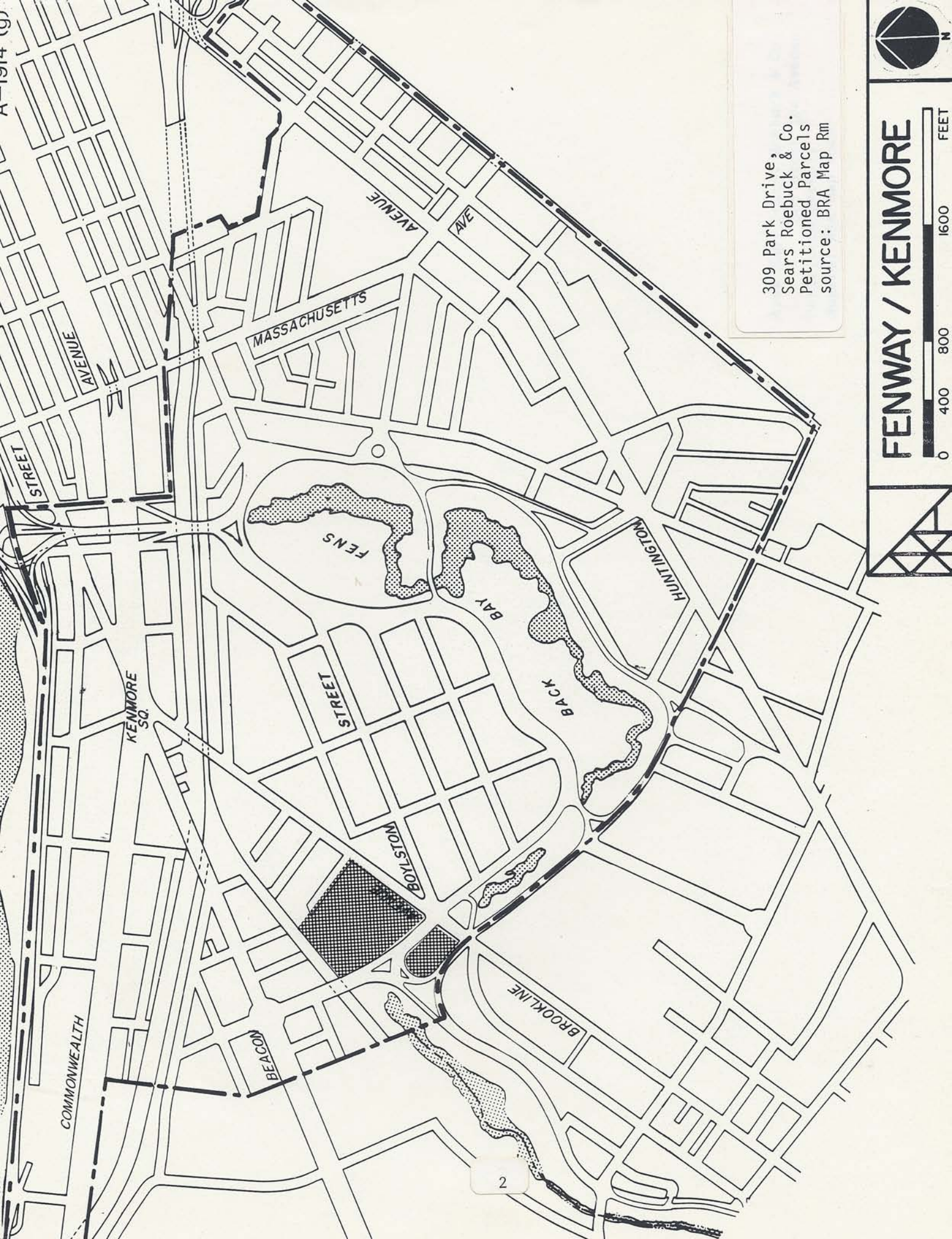
1.2 Area in Which the Property is Located:

The Sears building is located at the corner of Park Drive and Brookline Avenue in the West Fens. It is bounded on the southwest by Park Drive, on the southeast by Brookline Avenue, on the northwest by the MBTA Green Line "D" tracks, and on the northeast by Fullerton Street.

The building is situated in an area characterized by post 1900 masonry light industrial, commercial, warehouse and garage structures. The Back Bay Fens, an important part of Boston's coordinated park system, lies caddy corner to the Sears building, on the corner of Park Drive and Brookline Avenue. Directly across Park Street is a Sears customer parking lot which was part of the Back Bay Fens parklands until it was sold to Sears in 1965. To the south of the Sears site is the Longwood Medical Area. This area consists of 175 acres, contains over 25 medical and educational institutions, and provides over 9 million square feet of commercial/institutional space. Directly behind Sears on Fullerton Street is a recently renovated six story brick structure. Northeast of the Sears site is Kenmore Square, one of the city's significant commercial districts, containing over 125 businesses with annual sales of \$100 million. Train tracks run along the northwest border of the Sears parcel, parallel to the MBTA tracks, several yards away. The Sears lot receives a great deal of pedestrian traffic from MBTA riders using the Fenway stop, adjacent to the western edge of the Sears property.

1.3 Map showing location:

Attached.

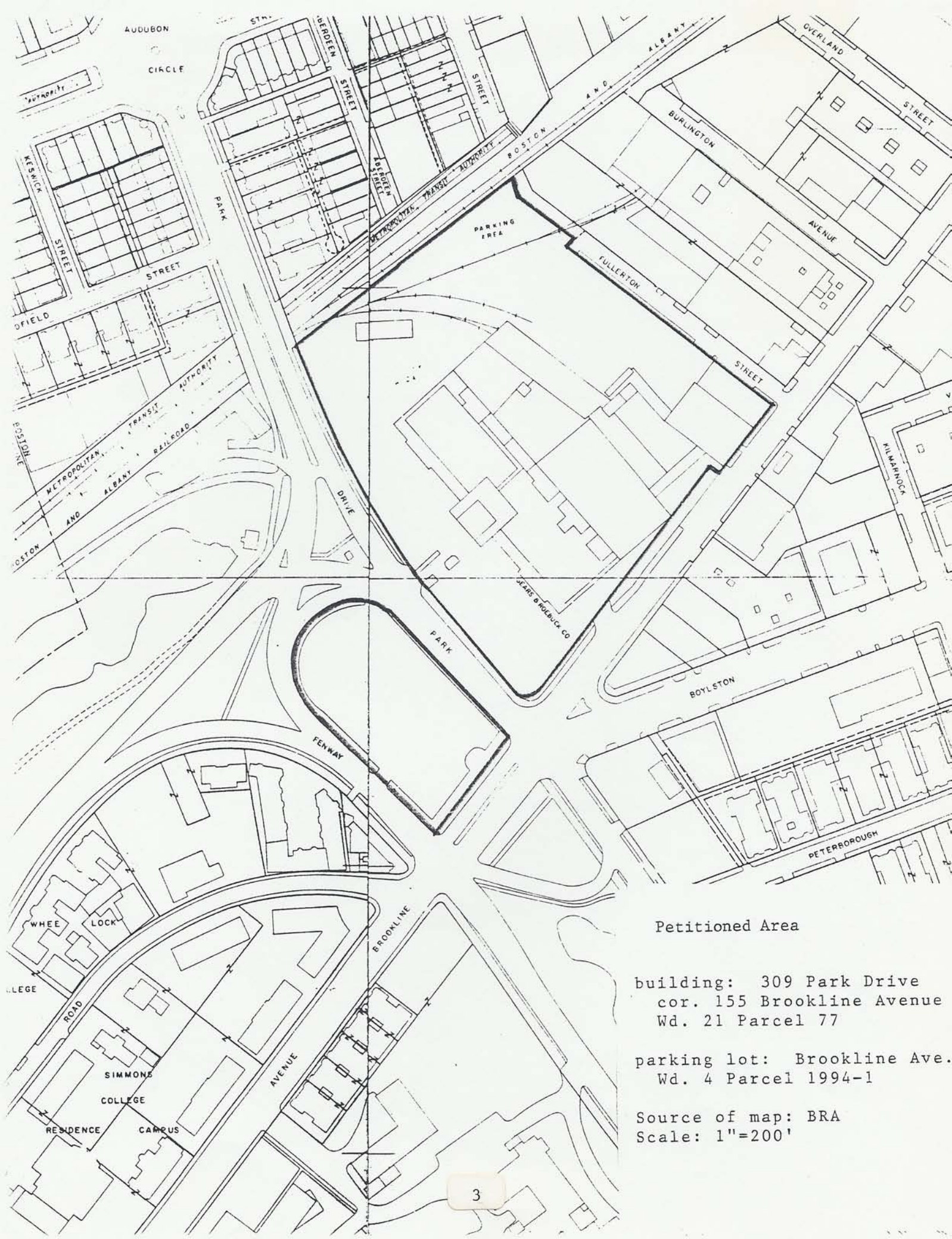


A-1914 (9)

309 Park Drive,
Sears Roebuck & Co.
Petitioned Parcels
source: BRA Map Rm

FENWAY / KENMORE

0 400 800 1600 FEET



Petitioned Area

building: 309 Park Drive
cor. 155 Brookline Avenue
Wd. 21 Parcel 77

parking lot: Brookline Ave.
Wd. 4 Parcel 1994-1

Source of map: BRA
Scale: 1"=200'

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use:

The Sears Roebuck & Co building is an eight story Art Moderne style commercial building. The basement and first floor, once a retail store, were most recently used for the sale of surplus goods. The second floor housed administrative offices, an employee cafeteria and a doctor's office. The mail order plant operated on the third through eighth floors. The tower contains a 50,000 gallon water tank, elevator machinery and an electrical control room.

2.2 Physical Description:

The Sears Roebuck & Co. Mail Order House sits prominently on a 385,142 square foot lot of the West Fens. The 1928 plant and its additions cover 56.5 percent of the lot surface. The remaining portion of the site, once adorned by landscaping, is now comprised of parking spaces and delivery lanes.

The building is faced with light beige-gray brick, cast stone and Indiana limestone trim. Lighter brick, spaced at even intervals, creates a checkerboard pattern on the elevations. The structure rises eight stories from its base with a twelve story tower centered above the southwest elevation. The four sides of the building are of unequal length, accounting for its skewed rectilinear form. The front or southwest tower elevation of the building is just over 440 feet long and set back more than 100 feet from Park Drive. The southeast elevation sits only a few feet from Brookline Avenue and is 262.92 feet long. The northwest elevation is 208.85 feet from the lot and spans 217.35 feet. The rear or northeast elevation is approximately 400 feet long and is set back 86.67 feet from Fullerton Street. Later additions to the rear and northeast side of the building have substantially increased the building's dimensions.

The building sits on a low limestone platform which is interrupted periodically by concrete steps leading to the main and side entrances. A narrow limestone belt course above the second floor wraps around the entire building, subdividing the lower base from the upper shaft and tower. Vertical brick faced piers of varying widths run the length of the elevation at regular intervals, giving the building a sense of verticality common in many Art Moderne buildings of the late 1920's and 1930's.

Following is a listing of the number of bays in each elevation including those added by three later additions referred to in the plans as Section M (1930), Section E (1948), and Section F (1965).

Southwest (front) elevation facing Park Drive
Original - 21
Section F - 8

Southeast elevation (Brookline Avenue)
Original - 15 (including two bays in tower)
Section E - 4
Section M - 5

Northeast (rear) elevation facing Fullerton Street
Section F - 19
Section M - 5
*Sections M and F completely block the first three floors of the original rear elevation which has 17 bays.

Northwest elevation (MBTA tracks)
Original - 10 (including two bays in tower)
Section F - 8
*The original northwest elevation has 13 bays.
Section F overlaps the first three floors of three of the original bays on this elevation.

Windows throughout the building have steel sash and muntins painted green; the muntin patterns vary, depending on the size and shape of the window. The windows are the austral type, popular in the 1920s. This type of window combined the appearance of a double-hung window, but provided increased ventilation, and easy operation. These windows have a fixed lights on four sides, with the two movable panels that pivot out. Each window has a limestone sill and lintel. The windows are placed in rows directly above one another, one window per floor. The widths vary depending on the distance of the piers, but each bay has windows of equal width.

From the basement to seventh floor, the windows are all rectangular with a vertical orientation, with each window surrounded by a paneled glass border. Arched windows, grouped in sets of three, alternate with the rectangular windows at the eighth story and in the tower.

The front elevation is the most decorative. Windows on the basement and ground floor are bricked over but the plans reveal they had a rectangular form, consistent in width but shorter than the windows immediately above them. Brick faced piers extend a bit past the eight story base creating a jagged silhouette. The coping on the uppermost section consists of a series of low bas-relief curvilinear ornamentation carved in stone. The ornamentation is interrupted every few bays by recesses in the building elevation created by piers of different mass.

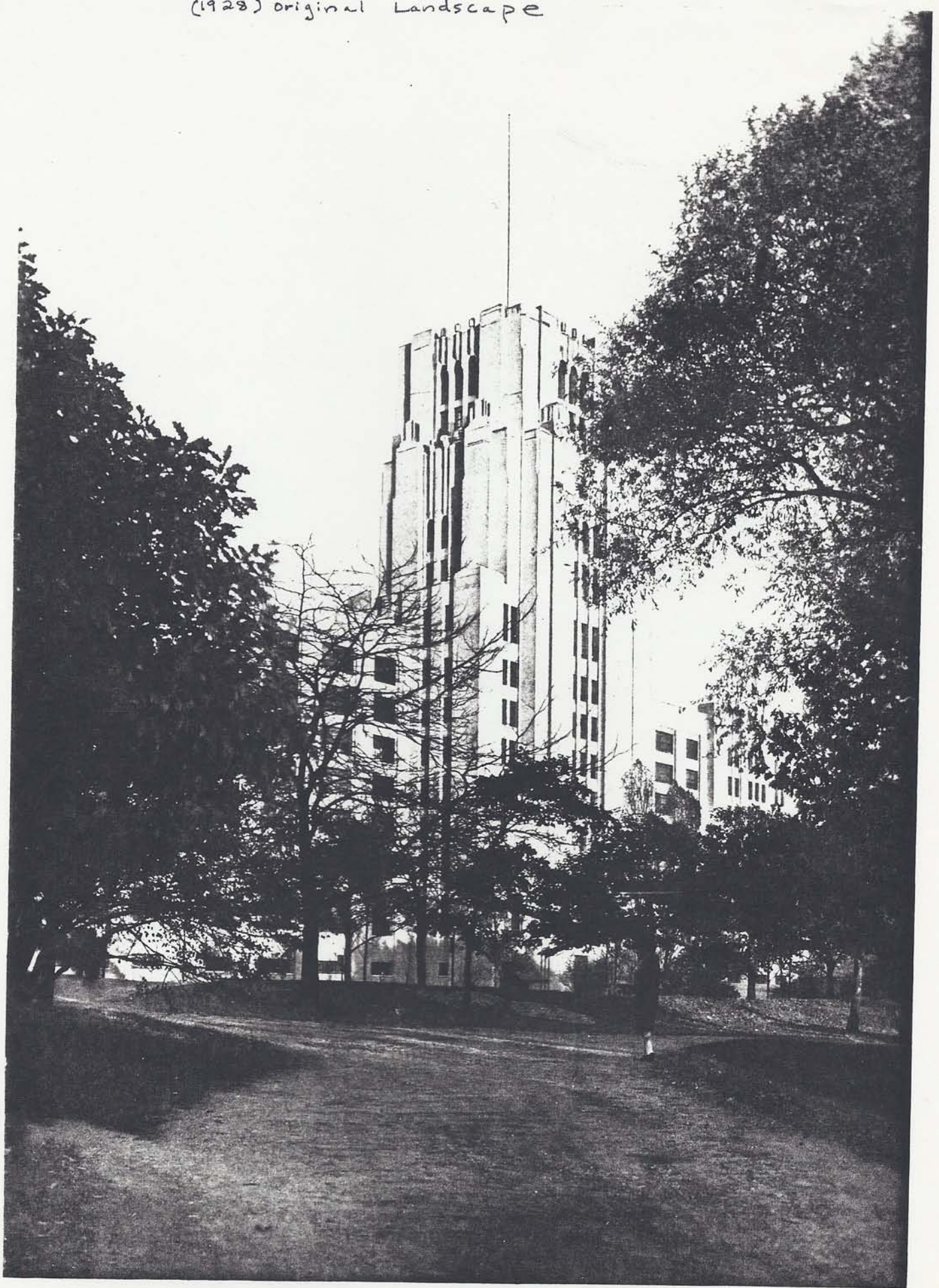
The main entrance is centered in the front elevation, directly below the tower. The arched doorway extends up two stories. The doorway is set between two bold piers which rise to jagged points up to the fourth floor. To the right, is one of the original entrances to the retail store which now leads to a basement surplus store. A one story show window, to the left, is now covered with brick infill. A carved stone lintel which once decorated the window remains.

The tower is four stories taller than the rest of the building, extending the building's height to 122 feet. The tower is thickest at its base. Decorative piers extend upward from the base on all four sides, creating a huge soaring mass of brick. The tower is topped by a 75 foot steel flag pole.

The other three elevations repeat much of the window and pier treatments of the front elevation. Although not readily visible, the upper portion of the rear elevation was built in two stages, with initial construction in 1928 and final completion in 1930. On the Brookline Avenue elevation there is another less grand entrance to what was once the retail store. Two wide square brick columns decorated with carved lintel reliefs enframe concrete steps leading to four glass doors. Above the doors, a gray metal sign reads "Sears" in red lettering. To the right and left of the entrance, two show windows have been replaced by metal vents and brick infill. Another door several feet to the right handles package pickups.

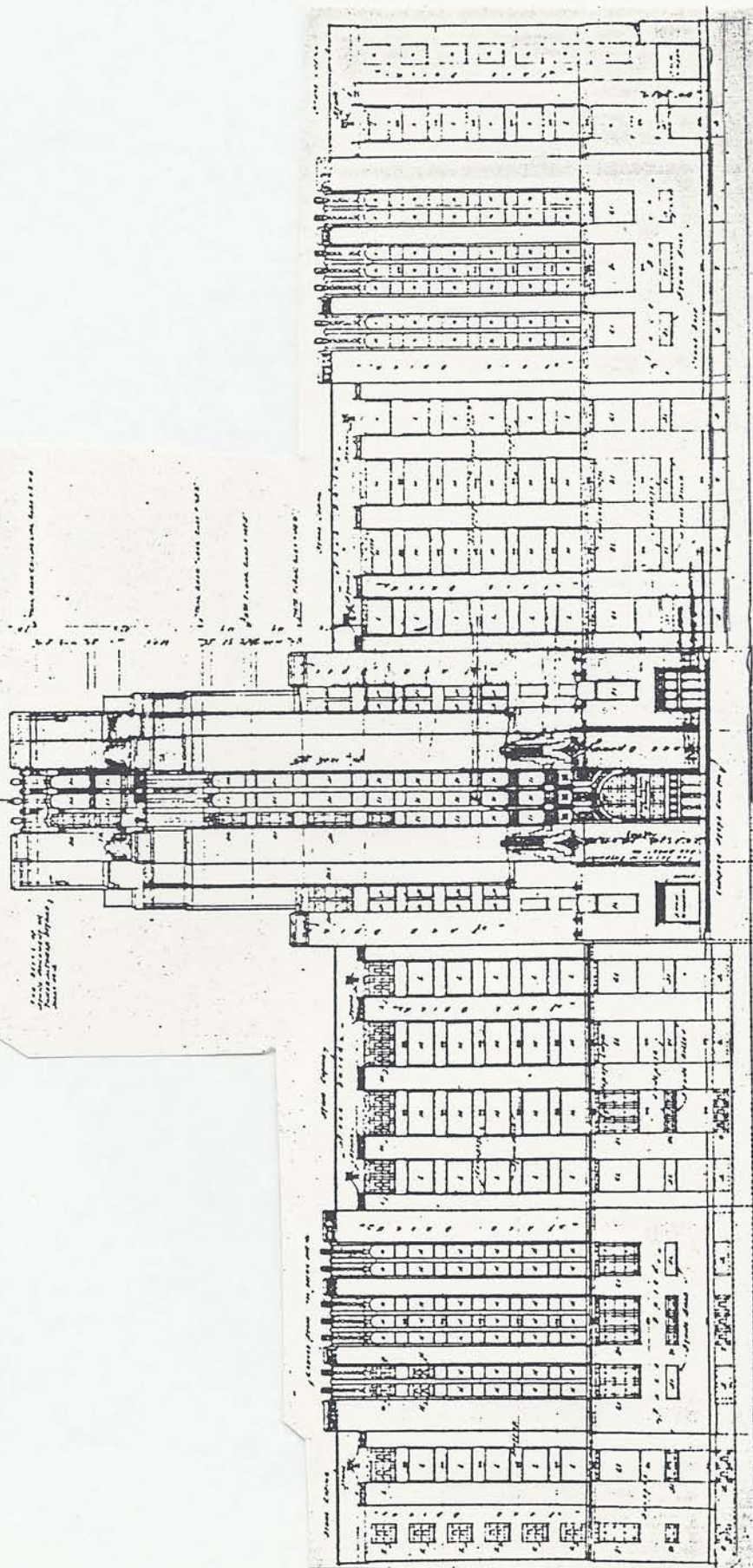
The interior is dotted with rows of large cylindrical pilings spaced 20 feet apart. The pilings are in the same location on each floor but become narrower in the upper floors. The interior is characterized by high ceilings and large open expanses of space with the exception of the first and second floors which housed administrative functions take place. The lobby, once a large open space with decorative wallpaper, has been completely restructured and covered with dark wood paneling.

- 2.3 Photographs:
 Attached.



SEARS, ROEBUCK BUILDING, BOSTON, MASS.

GEORGE C. NIMMONS & CO., Architects



Front Elevation



Sears Building: Southwest (main) elevation facing Park Drive (8/1989)



Sears Building: Window & door detail, southwest & southeast elevations (8/1989)



Sears Building: Southeast elevation facing Brookline Avenue.
Visible additions include section E (1948) and Miller Building (1930)
(8/1989)



Sears Building: Northeast (rear) elevation facing Fullerton Street.
Visible addition is section F (1965). (8/1989)



Sears Building: Northwest elevation facing MBTA Tracks
Visible addition is section F (1965). (8/1989)



Sears Customer Parking Lot, Parcel 1994-1. (8/1989)

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

3.1 Historical Significance

The Sears, Roebuck & Co Mail Order House was built 1928-1929, as the mail order and distribution center for all of New England and New York State. It was the last of ten Sears mail order plants designed by George C. Nimmons, and the 23rd or 24th building constructed by Sears since the company's inception in 1886.

Richard W. Sears, 1866 - 1916, was an advertising genius who realized he could make a fortune selling large quantities of goods at below market prices through the mail. In association with A.C. Roebuck, a watch repairman, Sears began by selling watches and jewelry by mail out of rented office space in Chicago in 1887. The business grew by leaps and bounds and the two entrepreneurs expanded to a more general merchandise line, including bicycles, clothing and sporting goods, in 1894.

By 1928, Sears, Roebuck & Co was considered the "world's largest store," serving over eleven million customers and earning over 300 million annually. In 1906, the company opened its first mail order house outside of Chicago, in Dallas, Texas. During the next fifteen years, Sears opened two more plants in Seattle and Philadelphia.

The erection of the Boston mail order plant signaled an end to the first major expansion of the Sears empire. The expansion program was launched in 1925 with the establishment of the first retail department store. Within three years, the company built six mail order house/retail store buildings, eight department stores, including the Cambridge store in 1928, and a number of automobile tire and accessory stores in many large cities throughout the country. The next mail order house was not constructed until 1947. The twelfth and final mail order house opened in 1972.

A great deal of fanfare surrounded the opening of the Sears, Roebuck & Co building. The Mayor, Lieutenant Governor and President of the Boston Chamber of Commerce welcomed the company to the area at an opening day ceremony held on the front steps of the building before a crowd of hundreds of eager customers, on August 30, 1928. The Lieutenant Governor made the first purchase: "a pair of lady's silk stockings in one of the prevailing shades of gray costing \$1.95." To celebrate the great event, Sears kept the Boston and Cambridge stores open from 9:00a.m. to 9:00p.m. for three days. Extra street cars were put into service to handle the crowds.

The Retail Trade Board of The Boston Chamber of Commerce held a luncheon for Sears executives at the Parker House on opening day. Executives from most of the major Boston retail establishments were in attendance, including Filenes, Jordan Marsh, Gilchrest, and Shreve Crump & Lowe. The Chamber of Commerce President summed up the general mood in stating, "This magnificent building is more than merely a store. It is a monument to the advancement of a great business institution and to the progress of Metropolitan Boston as one of the great trading centers of the country."

In addition to creating some 1200 new jobs in the Boston area, the new plant increased mail receipts so dramatically that the post office installed a U.S. parcel post office in the building and hired twelve clerks to work in that office. The Boston plant took over the catalog orders for New England and parts of New York which previously were handled by the Philadelphia plant. Over 250 new employees were sent to the Philadelphia plant to receive training in mail order and retail operations.

In keeping with the policy of the company, Sears patronized many of the local manufacturers and craftsmen to fill its orders. Through its catalog, Sears made New England products available to people all over the country. As one Sears official noted, "a by product of the building of the great mail order house in Boston is the upbuilding and advertising of the city." Hundreds of thousands of people ordered items through the Boston catalog and came to visit the Boston and Cambridge retail stores each year.

The extraordinary reception Sears, Roebuck & Co received in Boston was due in part to the national reputation which proceeded it through its mail order business. Before opening its doors in Boston, Sears already had an established client base of 369,373 regular mail order customers in New England. For many, the opportunity to see the 35,000 catalog items displayed in a retail store was a temptation too great to resist.

All eight of the Boston daily newspapers at the time covered the opening. A series of articles comprising six full pages on the building and the history of the company, was published in the Boston Herald. Over 20 companies who participated in the construction and outfitting of the building placed ads in this issue which were positioned along the edges of the pages on which the Sears articles appeared. The ads are primarily from Boston based companies and demonstrate the sense of excitement and pride generated by the association of Sears with Boston.

Absent from any of the opening day articles, however, is mention of several fatal accidents which occurred during the construction of the building. On April 18, 1928, three men were killed and four men were seriously injured in two separate accidents which occurred within five hours of each other. First, a carpenter was killed when a heavy wooden mold used for holding concrete, toppled over and fell from the second floor on a man who was working at the basement level. While the medical examiner was at the site to view the victim, the medical examiner was nearly knocked off a ladder and was covered by debris when the second accident occurred in the ninth bay from Brookline Avenue, fronting on Fullerton Street. In this accident, two metal hoppers, weighing a half ton each and containing approximately four tons of concrete punched through the third floor frame, tearing a hole 20 feet square. Seven or eight men who had been working on the third floor spreading concrete in the floor forms were swept down to the second floor in a mass of cement and debris. In a deposition taken several days later, the builder and work crew concurred that the shoring failed because it had not been braced properly.

The accidents caused near panic among the 1500 men working at the plant at that time. "Many of the men, especially the iron workers, refused to go back to any part of the structure for the balance of the afternoon. These workmen freely expressed (their) belief that the work was being rushed too much for safety." Another reporter noted the workmen's concerns over the "unusual haste with which the job (was) being pushed along."

After the second accident, all the workmen were sent home and a guard was placed outside to keep journalists and photographers away. The officials were apparently trying to minimize the damage to Sears' good reputation which had been somewhat tainted several months earlier when another terrible accident occurred during the preparation of the building supports. In this incident, two men were killed and several hundred injured when workmen hit a gas line while digging holes to support the building.

It is likely that these mishaps occurred because Sears planned and constructed this structure in a remarkably short period of time, just over a year. The minutes from an early Board of Directors meeting reveal that the idea to put a plant in Boston was first conceived in October 1927. The site was selected and plans drawn up in record time and construction began in December 1927. The retail store and mail order portion of the building was not yet complete. Apparently, Sears was anxious to have the store in full operation before the 1928 Christmas season.

In 1986 Sears officials announced that the mail order plant was closing and that the building was up for sale. Boston is just one of six of the twelve plants to close in the next few years as a result of Sears' effort to stream line its mail order and retail businesses. Of the original ten plants designed by George C. Nimmons, only the Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Dallas buildings will remain in operation. A number of older Nimmons' department stores are also being closed, including the 1928 Cambridge store which is being converted into a multi-use commercial development.

Discussions with a number of longtime employees revealed the tremendous loss occasioned by the closing of the plant. The average employee has worked at the plant 19 years and many feel very devoted to the company and their fellow employees. Sears is noted for having taken great care to safeguard their employees health and financial security. A hospital, which originally staffed a doctor and two nurses full time, still remains open for emergency care and physical examinations although the staff has been reduced over the years. Many employees participate in a profit sharing plan and pension fund which were instituted at the inception. The company planned its buildings and administrative policies around the belief that good working conditions led to employee satisfaction and higher productivity. The employees themselves confirmed that this policy has been successful.

3.2 Architectural Significance

The Sears, Roebuck & Co Mail Order House is considered to be a fine, early, and locally rare example of the Art Moderne style in Boston. Opened in 1928, this building is the last of ten mail order plants designed by George C. Nimmons for Sears. This light beige-gray brick and Indiana limestone building, with its soaring 12 story tower, is the most prominent landmark in the West Fens.

As is typical of early Art Moderne buildings of the late 1920's and 1930's, the design stresses the building's verticality. Piers of varying widths extend the full length of the elevation, forming a jagged silhouette. Different curvilinear patterns of abstract relief ornamentation are carved into much of limestone on the tower and uppermost section of the building. Such ornamentation is also found on the lower levels above entrance ways and display windows which were bricked over in 1968. Narrow green trimmed windows, placed above one another between the soaring piers, add to the vertical emphasis of the building.

Although originally conceived of and built in stages, the building functions as a unified whole. The front elevation on Park Drive comprised Sections A and B and was built all at once. Section C, the left rear quadrant, was only one story and a basement when the building opened in 1928. Section D, comprising the right rear quadrant, was originally four stories and a basement. Sections C and D were raised to eight stories in 1930, giving the main building a unified tower-like appearance.

The building's integrity was severely damaged by two later brick additions. A 1948 addition, referred to as Section E, joined the main building to a small garage, known as the Miller Building and cut into a substantial portion of the first three floors of Section D. In 1965, a three story brick structure known as Section F was added. Section F runs almost the entire length of the Fullerton Street elevation and half way up the northwest side of the building, completely destroying the lower floors of Section C and part of Section D.

Although the overall silhouette of the front elevation remains intact, its integrity has also been moderately compromised by later alterations. All of the first floor windows as well as two large display windows have been bricked over with little sensitivity to matching the brick. As a result the first and second floors of the front elevation have an inconsistent appearance.

George C. Nimmons

The architect, George C. Nimmons (1865 - 1947) worked for ten years as a draftsman for the Chicago firm of Burnham & Root before forming a partnership with William K. Fellows in 1897. Nimmons and Fellows designed a number of large commercial structures in Chicago, including the first Sears & Roebuck plant, considered to be one of their most successful works. From 1910 to 1917, Nimmons practiced alone and then formed George C. Nimmons & Company which operated until 1933. It was during this era when Nimmons designed the Boston plant and Cambridge department store. Nimmons was senior partner of the firm of Nimmons, Carr & Wright from 1933 to 1945. Although Nimmons & Co. drafted the plans for the Boston plant, many of the early alterations, including the increase of Sections C and D to eight stories, were designed while the architect was affiliated with Nimmons, Carr & Wright.

During his lifetime, Nimmons was regarded as a leader in the design of the modern industrial building. He published numerous articles on the subject, including a series of seven articles in the Architectural Record from 1918 to 1919. Nimmons rejected the notion that the "chief function of the architect is to put ornamentation of an industrial building after someone else has planned it and worked out its construction."

Nimmons believed that the architect should play a vital role in the design of industrial buildings. It was his belief that "whenever any manufacturer or commercial concern institutes conditions in its plants that are better than the minimum required by law for the care and control of its employees, and when at the same time it erects buildings which by their plan and design result in reducing the cost and improving the quality or the manner of handling its products, then such a concern is a public benefactor." Nimmons carried this philosophy over into his design of the Sears plants, where working spaces are light and comfortable and costly exterior ornamentation is minimal.

The tower, which embellishes all of the early Sears plants and retail stores and other structures designed by Nimmons, became the architect's trademark. The tower was a functional design which came about because insurance companies required that industrial plants install water tanks at a certain height above the buildings which were protected against freezing. Nimmons felt that the added expense of enclosing the tank in a tower at the main entrance was relatively small when compared to the advantages of increased office space, lower maintenance costs and aesthetic appeal. If left exposed, the water tank would have been a prominent eyesore in long distance views of the buildings.

During construction of the Boston building, Nimmons wrote:

The Boston building, when completed will be typical in its arrangement and equipment of the ten mail order plants throughout the country. The Boston store in design does not follow any historic style of architecture. It represents an effort to express architecturally the plan and construction along the line of 'modern' design.

The "modern" design of which Nimmons wrote is now an established historic style in its own right and the Sears, Roebuck & Co Mail Order House is one of the foremost examples of this style in Boston.

3.3 Relationship to Landmark Designation Criteria

The Sears, Roebuck & Co. Building meets the criteria for Landmark designation as defined in Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 as follows:

--structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military or social history of the city, commonwealth, the New England Region or the nation.

--structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study, of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer, or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

The assessed value of parcel 77 in Ward 21 is \$36,905,000, of which \$9,243,500 is for the land and \$27,661,500 is for the building. The assessed value of the property for the customer's parking lot, parcel 1994-1, Ward 4, is \$1,824,500.

4.2 Current Ownership and Occupancy

The building is owned and maintained by Sears, Roebuck & Co. The property is under agreement to Olmsted Plaza Associates (a joint venture of JBM/Urban Development Company and Macomber Development Associates) with a closing date of December 1989.

The building is presently not in use, and is under the care of Sears, Roebuck & Co.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

The Sears Roebuck & Co Mail Order House is located in the West Fens section of Fenway. Originally, the Fenway was made up of unfilled Charles River basin flats and the Muddy River weaved in and out of the region.

The Fens represented the boundary between Boston and Brookline, and provided drainage for Roxbury and Dorchester. The Muddy River and Stony Brook also emptied into the marsh before moving to the Charles River Basin. Landfill commenced in the late 1850's and it was believed that the emerging Back Bay residential neighborhood would eventually adjoin Brookline. However, growth was impeded because of numerous railroad tracks built across the Charles River basin.

In 1878, after various proposals to solve the problems created by the odorous marsh were rejected, the Park Commission hired Frederick Law Olmsted to come up with a solution for the area. Olmsted created the Back Bay Fens, which solved the drainage problems and created a public park which became an important part of the park system of Boston.

As the city grew westward, the filled land in the Fens was sold to speculators and turned into the East and West Fens, on which apartment and hotel complexes were developed. By the later 1880's, there were numerous horsecar railroad lines travelling through the Fenway/Kenmore area, which merged into the West End Street Railway Company in 1887. In 1889, the first electric car line began operation between Boston and Brookline.

Park Drive (formerly Audubon Road) was laid out as part of Olmsted's Park System during the late 1890's - early 1900's in anticipation of substantial row house development similar to that of the Fenway, on the eastern side of the Back Bay Fens. Residential development, however, did not predominate in the West Fens. Rather, four and five story adjoining apartment complexes oriented to the Back Bay Fens were constructed almost exclusively in the section south of Boylston Street.

The area north of Boylston Street was primarily composed of commercial and light industrial structures in addition to a riding school (1900), Fenway Park (1912) and the Sears, Roebuck & Co building which was constructed in 1928. The Sears plant was a watershed in the development of the West Fens. As one journalist noted, "There is no doubt that the erection of this building and the establishment of the retail department store (has) made a very definite contribution to the commercial life of the city, and in particular (has) taken an important step in the development of that section of Boston lying just beyond the Fenway."

5.2 Current Planning Issues

The proposed buyers and developers of the Sears parcel have completed a Project Notification Form (PNF), submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority in June 1989, which describes their development plan. The following description of the developer's proposal is derived from that PNF:

In 1988, Sear, Roebuck & Co. made a strategic business decision to reduce the number of its regional catalog distribution centers. The number of centers was cut from 10 to 6 in an effort to make its nationwide system more efficient and cost effective. One of the results of this business decision was the shut-down of the Fenway Sears facility. In November of 1988, two development companies, JMB/Urban and Macomber Development Associates (MDA), formed a joint venture to redevelop the 8.9 acre site. The developers are proposing a mixed use complex, including office, retail space and possibly a hotel. The project has been named Olmsted Plaza.

The entire project will include nearly \$1.7 million square feet of development, and will cost approximately \$250 million. The centerpiece of the development will be the restoration of the main Sears building. Two new buildings, one of twelve stories which would contain a new MBTA Fenway Park Station, and one of sixteen stories, will be built on the site, bracketing the main building. Substantial improvements to the landscape of the site are proposed, which is currently almost exclusively a paved surface parking lot.

The project will be responsible for traffic and transit improvements aimed at relieving long term traffic congestion, the return and reconstruction of the "missing link" Emerald Necklace parcel, as many as 200 units of affordable housing, \$7.9 million in housing linkage monies, \$1.6 million in job training monies, a job training center, and a day care center.

The developers state that they hope to have all public reviews and approvals completed in 1989, before advancing the sizable funds associated with the purchase price. A Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and a Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) will be available for review in September, and final reports will be completed in the fall.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives:

Alternatives open to the Boston Landmarks Commission include designation of both, or portions of the petitioned parcels, ward 21, parcel 77, on which the Sears building is sited and/or ward 4, parcel 1994-1, on which the Sears customer parking lot is sited. The commission may designate part of these sites as a Protection Area. The commission retains the option of not designating the building or site.

An alternative would be the inclusion of the property on the National Register of Historic Places. If listed on the National Register, the property would receive a limited degree of protection against federal or state undertakings.

6.2 Impact of alternatives:

Landmark designation under Chapter 772 would require the review of physical changes to the exterior of any building included in the designation, as well as any designated grounds, in accordance with the standards and criteria adopted as part of the designation. It would not, however, affect the use or treatment of the interior of the building.

In a Protection Area, which is limited to 1200 feet from the boundary of a landmark. Standards and Criteria "shall relate only to demolition, land coverage, height of structures, landscape and topography."

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places would provide protection from federal, federally-licensed or federally-assisted actions undertaken by Section 106 Review process. Similar protection from state-sponsored activities is achieved by the concurrent listings of all National Register properties to the State Register of Historic Places under Chapter 254, General Laws of Massachusetts.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the original Sears, Roebuck & Co. structure (1928-30) as defined in the Areas Recommended for Designation Map, be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. This is the original building with its rear addition of 1930, and excludes later additions that have been made to the building.

The staff also recommends that the remainder of parcel 77 in ward 21, be designated a Protection Area. A protection area is defined as: "any area designated by the commission in accordance with section four as an area which is contiguous to and constitutes an essential part of the physical environment of any architectural conservation district, landmark or landmark district." A protection area must be "visually related to the landmark, landmark district or architectural conservation district but is not necessarily of sufficient historical, social, cultural or aesthetic significance to warrant designation as such."

Parcel 1994-1, the Sears Customer Parking Lot, in ward 4 should be included in the designation of the Emerald Necklace Parks (petition #142.88). Parcel 1994-1 was petitioned with the Emerald Necklace Parks and should be included in that designation since it is historically associated with the parks.

See attached map.

8.0 BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

8.1 Introductory Statement on Standards and Criteria to be used in Evaluating Applications for Certificates

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

The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark Designation.

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

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

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

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

- (a) Building code conformance and safety requirements.
- (b) Changes necessitated by the introduction of modern mechanical and electrical systems.
- (c) Changes due to proposed new uses of a property.
The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for a particular property. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the property.

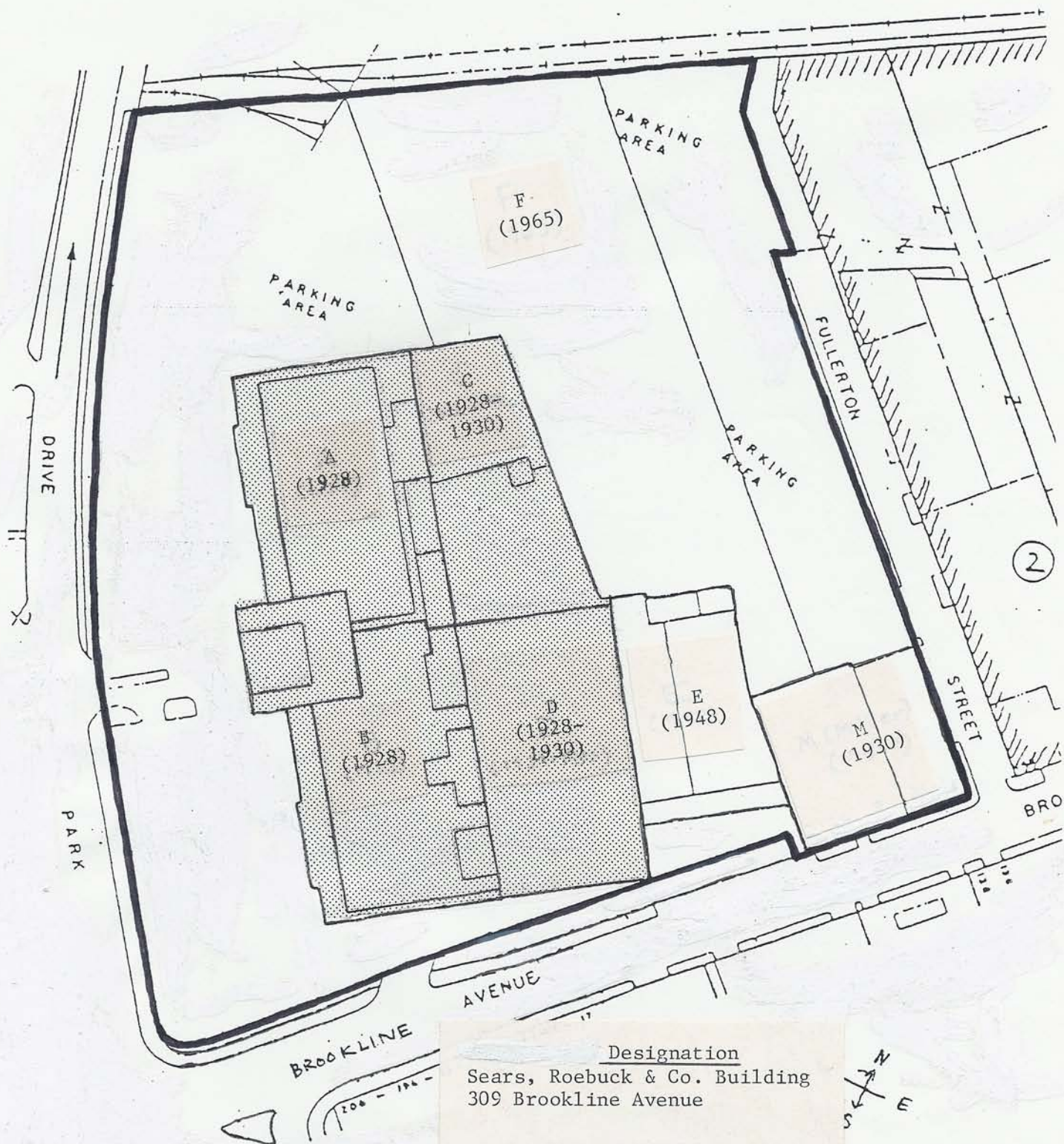
In some cases, priorities have been assigned within the Standards and Criteria as an aid to property owners in identifying the most critical design features.

The Standards and Criteria have been divided into two levels: (1) those general ones that are common to almost all landmark designations (subdivided into categories for buildings and landscape features); and (2) those specific ones that apply to each particular property that is designated. In every case the Specific Standard and Criteria for a particular property shall take precedence over the General ones if there is a conflict.

It is also anticipated that the developers will be seeking Master Plan/Planned Development Area (MP/PDA) approval for this project. Thus, the project will be subject to the review and approval of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Boston Zoning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals, among others. The developers have held public meetings, and plan to hold future meetings, to discuss the project with business and community representatives. Construction is expected to begin in the first quarter of 1990, with initial occupancy scheduled for January of 1992.

Regarding the Emerald Necklace parcel which had been the Sears customer parking lot, the PNF states the following.

Olmsted Plaza Associates has committed to returning the nearly two-acre "Emerald Necklace" parcel to the public domain and working for and contributing financially to, its reconstruction. To this end, the developers have prepared a conceptual restoration plan for the parcel. The plan carries out the concepts of the Olmsted Park System Master Plan prepared for the State's Department of Environmental Management, by linking walkways and bicycle paths, maintaining consistency in formal and informal plantings, and making a gesture to the river course that formally ran through the site. It is anticipated that this work would cost approximately \$1 million.



8.2 GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

A. APPROACH

1. The design approach to the property should begin with the premise that the features of historical and architectural significance described within the Study Report must be preserved. In general this will minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.
2. Changes to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. ("Later integral features" shall be the term used to convey this concept.)
3. Deteriorated material or architectural features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later integral features.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color texture and other visual qualities. The use of imitation replacement materials is generally discouraged.
6. New additions or alterations should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.
7. Contemporary design is encouraged for new additions; thus, they must not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
8. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.
9. Priority shall be given to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or which it can be reasonably inferred may be in the future.
10. Color will be considered as part of specific standards and criteria that apply to a particular property.

B. EXTERIOR WALLS

I. MASONRY

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

II. NON-MASONRY

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

C. ROOFS

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

D. WINDOWS AND DOORS

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

E. PORCHES, STEPS AND EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

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

F. SIGNS, MARQUEES AND AWNINGS

1. Signs, marquees and awnings integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be retained where necessary.
2. New signs, marquees and awnings shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
3. New signs, marquees, awnings shall be of a size and material compatible with the building and its current use.
4. Signs, marquees and awnings applied to the building shall be applied in such a way that they could be removed without damaging the building.
5. All signs added to the building shall be part of one system of design, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the communication intent.

6. Lettering forms or typeface will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally shall either be contemporary or relate to the period of the building or its later integral features.
7. Lighting of signs will be evaluated for the specific use intended, but generally illumination of a sign shall not dominate illumination of the building.
8. The foregoing notwithstanding, signs are viewed as the most appropriate vehicle for imaginative and creative expression, especially in structures being reused for purpose different from the original, and it is not the Commission's intent to stifle a creative approach to signage.

G. PENTHOUSES

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

H. LANDSCAPE FEATURES

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later integral landscape features that enhance the landmark property.

2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the landmark and its new surroundings.
3. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the landmark or site. Additional landforms shall only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the landmark.
4. Original layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas should be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the landmark.
5. Existing healthy plant materials should be maintained as long as possible. New plant materials should be added on a schedule that will assure a continuity in the original landscape design and its later adaptations.
6. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider maintaining existing vistas of the landmark.

I. EXTERIOR LIGHTING

1. There are three aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building:
 - (a) Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements or architectural ornamentation.
 - (b) Quality of illumination on building exterior.
 - (c) Interior lighting as seen from the exterior.
2. Wherever integral to the building, original lighting fixtures shall be retained. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
3. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
 - (a) Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.

- (b) Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
 - (c) New lighting fixtures which are contemporary in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
4. If a fixture is to be replaced, the new exterior lighting shall be located where intended in the original design. If supplementary lighting is added, the new location shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.
 5. Interior lighting shall only be reviewed when its character has a significant effect on the exterior of the building; that is, when the view of the illuminated fixtures themselves, or the quality and color of the light they produce, is clearly visible through the exterior fenestration.

J. REMOVAL OF LATER ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

1. Each property will be separately studied to determine if later additions and alterations can, or should, be removed. It is not possible to provide one general guideline.
2. Factors that will be considered include:
 - (a) Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
 - (b) Historic association with the property.
 - (c) Quality in the design and execution of the addition.
 - (d) Functional usefulness.

9.0 SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA
Sears Building, 309 Park Drive

A. GENERAL

The intent of these standards is to preserve the stylistic integrity and appearance of the main Sears Block, constructed between 1928-1930. The general approach is to allow no change to those elements which are essential to the style and to encourage or control change to other elements to enhance the appearance of the building.

All four elevations are subject to review. The southwest (front) facing Park Drive and southeast facing Brookline Avenue are the most visible elevations, and are subject to the most stringent review; the northwest and northeast elevations are subject to less stringent review.

B. EXTERIOR WALLS

1. Limestone and cast stone detailing shall be preserved. If replacement is necessary, stone must be replaced in kind to match size, shape, color, profile and pattern of original.
2. All existing brickwork shall be carefully preserved. Decorative brick patterns on elevations and corners shall be preserved. Replacement brick should replicate original pattern and match existing in color, size and texture. Specifications will insure that joint size and color of new materials match original.
3. No new openings will be allowed in the elevations unless based on historic documentation. No original, extant openings shall be filled or changed in size or configuration unless based on historic documentation. .
4. When necessary to clean masonry, use gentlest method possible. Do not sandblast. Test patches should be carried out well in advance of cleaning.
5. Waterproofing or water repellent coating to masonry is not permitted.

D. ROOF

No additions visible from a public way shall be permitted on roof.

1. All proposals for visible HVAC equipment shall be reviewed by the Commission, and such equipment shall be concealed within the integral architectural features of the building.

E. WINDOWS AND DOORS

1. The original steel, austral and awning-type windows shall be retained. Repair is preferable to replacement. Consulting "Preservation Brief 13, The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows," by the Technical Preservation Services, NPS is recommended.

If replacement is necessary, it should match the original, existing design in size, shape, configuration, and muntin pattern.

2. Any original doors and door frames must be retained. Repair of existing doors based on historic documentation is encouraged.
3. Consideration will be given to changing from the original window details to other expressions when consideration of appropriateness overrides the desire for historical accuracy.

F. SIGNS, AWNINGS AND MARQUEES

1. Awnings or Marquees will not be allowed unless based on historical documentation. No awnings will be permitted above the first floor.
2. Projecting signs may not be attached to the building.

H EXTERIOR LIGHTING

1. Architectural lighting will be reviewed by the Commission. Lighting should not be attached directly to exterior building elevation. Fixtures should be mounted in an inconspicuous manner, with sensitivity to materials.
2. Removal of security lighting attached to elevations and along parapet is encouraged.

9.1 Standards & Criteria - Protection Area
Sear's Parcel

General

The general intent is to insure that the Sears Block remains as a prominent, free-standing structure on the parcel. New construction should not overpower the structure, diminish its stature or significantly alter its appearance.

1. Demolition will be reviewed by the Commission. Demolition of 1948 and 1965 additions and the Miller Building (1930) is encouraged.
2. Land Coverage. The character of the site and surrounding area is urban. Therefore, the site may accommodate additional structures. Placement and massing of new construction will be reviewed by the Commission.
3. Building height and massing of new construction should not diminish the prominence of the Sears tower. The cornice line of the Sears block should be maintained along its principal elevations which face Park Drive and Brookline Avenue. Setbacks will be considered.
4. Landscaping and Topography. Additional hard surfaces are discouraged. Landscape treatments should be based on historic documentation if possible.

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