



City of Boston  
Landmarks Commission

**FOR BLC USE ONLY**  
DO NOT WRITE OR STAMP IN THIS BOX

Petition number: \_\_\_\_\_

Received on: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Executive Director*

Schedule for preliminary hearing:  
\_\_\_\_\_

# LANDMARK PETITION FORM

**Note:** This petition must be completed in full in order to be accepted and scheduled for a preliminary hearing. Type or print legibly.  
Please email BLC@boston.gov with questions regarding the petition process.  
*Date Draft Recd:*

## PETITION

We, ten undersigned voters of the City of Boston, petition the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) as authorized by Chapter 772 of the acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended.

**TO DESIGNATE**

**TO AMEND THE DESIGNATION OF**

**TO RESCIND THE DESIGNATION OF**

**THE FOLLOWING:** \_\_\_\_\_

Hotel Buckminster (The Buckminster), 635-645 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Fenway

*(Please include historic name of property if known)*

### PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS FROM ASSESSOR'S RECORDS:

**NAME:** IQHQ-645 Beacon LLC

**ADDRESS:** 201 Washington St, Suite 3920, One Boston Place, Boston, MA **ZIP CODE:** 02108

**WARD AND PARCEL NUMBER FROM ASSESSOR'S RECORDS:** Ward 5, Precinct 10 - Parcel ID 0504150000

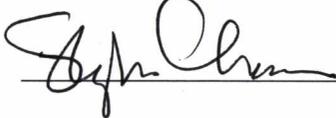
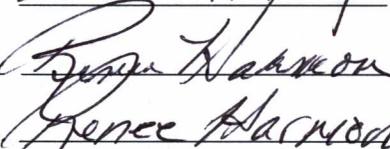
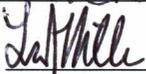
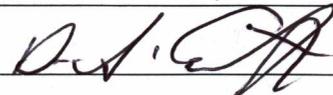
*Assessing information available at boston.gov. A copy of a current tax bill may be attached to the petition as necessary.*

### WE RECOMMEND THE DESIGNATION CATEGORY TO BE: *(check one; see instructions for details)*

- LANDMARK** *(Check one of the following)*  Exterior only  Interior only  Exterior and Interior
- LANDMARK DISTRICT**  **ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  **PROTECTION AREA**

**PETITIONERS** must be residents and registered voters of the City of Boston.

Home address and email address must be provided for each petitioner; the petition may be returned if this information is incomplete. Names must be typed or printed legibly under the signature. Please include a few more than ten petitioners in case a name is illegible or a petitioner is not a registered voter. Attach additional copies of this page as necessary.

SIGNATURE AND NAME	ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	E-MAIL ADDRESS
1. <u></u> STEPHEN CHASE	<u>65 PARK DRIVE #21 BOSTON</u> <u>143 PARK DRIVE</u> <u>UNIT #22</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>STEVECHASE1@GMAIL.COM</u>
2. <u>GLENNYS CAMPBELL</u>	<u>BOSTON</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>NONE</u>
3. <u></u> <u>Elvira Castillo</u>	<u>143 Park Drive</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>—</u>
4. <u>Ruth E Khowais</u> Ruth E. Khowais	<u>35 Queensberry St</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>REKhowais@earthlink.net</u>
5. <u>LAURA KELLEY</u> LAURA Kelley	<u>66 FENWAY</u>	<u>02115</u>	<u>KELLEYLAURA021@GMAIL</u>
6. <u></u> Renee Harmon	<u>97 Hemenway St</u>	<u>02128</u>	<u>—</u>
7. <u>Richard Dunshee</u> Richard Dunshee	<u>65 West Eagle St.</u>	<u>East Bo</u>	<u>East Boston, MA</u>
8. <u></u> Laura Jean Miller	<u>905 Beacon St</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>laurajeannmiller5@gmail.com</u>
9. <u>Leslie Pond</u> LESLIE POND	<u>27 Park Dr. #18</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>leslie.b.pond@gmail.com</u>
10. <u></u> D. S. EVERETT, JR	<u>11 PARK DR. #10</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>EVERWOODPARK@GMAIL.COM</u>

**SPOKESPERSON FOR PETITIONER** Alison Frazee, Executive Director, Boston Preservation Alliance

**PHONE NUMBER:** (617) 302-6251

**E-MAIL:** afrazee@bostonpreservation.org

**PETITIONERS** must be residents and registered voters of the City of Boston.

Home address and email address must be provided for each petitioner; the petition may be returned if this information is incomplete. Names must be typed or printed legibly under the signature. Please include a few more than ten petitioners in case a name is illegible or a petitioner is not a registered voter. Attach additional copies of this page as necessary.

SIGNATURE AND NAME	ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	E-MAIL ADDRESS
1. <u>Steven J. Wolf</u> STEVEN J. WOLF	<u>11 Park Drive #8</u>	<u>02215</u>	<u>grafikos2@gmail.com</u>
2. <u>Alison Pultinas</u> Alison Pultinas	<u>81 LAWN ST</u>	<u>02120</u>	<u>dpultinasboston@aol.com</u>
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____	_____

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**PHONE NUMBER:** (617) 302-6251

**E-MAIL:** afrazee@bostonpreservation.org

## SURVEY RATING CATEGORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

City of Boston Building Inventory Form #: **BOS. 7312**

Survey Rating Category (**From Building Inventory Form**): (check one)

- NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE** (formerly I. Highest Significance)
- STATE SIGNIFICANCE** (formerly II. Major Significance)
- LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE** (formerly III. Significant)
- CONTRIBUTING TO A HISTORIC DIST. & MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A HISTORIC DIST.**  
(formerly IV. Notable & V. Minor) Letter requesting rating change submitted herewith
- NON-CONTRIBUTING** (formerly VI. Non-Contributing)

The Building Inventory form can be accessed online via the Mass. Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) at <https://maps.mhc-macris.net/> or by contacting BLC staff at [BLC@boston.gov](mailto:BLC@boston.gov). In the absence of a Building Inventory Form or a Survey Rating Category, you must contact BLC staff with a written request for a Survey Rating Category. **BLC staff shall not accept petitions for buildings without a survey rating category, or that are rated Local Significance, Contributing to a Historic District, May Contribute to a Historic District, or Non-Contributing.**

In lieu of accepting petitions for buildings rated Local Significance and lower, the BLC shall invite petitioners or other parties to submit a letter requesting the Commission to review the rating and consider changing it. It shall be the obligation of anyone requesting a rating change to submit information that will assist BLC staff and the Commission with its review.

## RESEARCH CHECKLIST

Please fill out the checklist below to indicate sources of information, if applicable. Check which resources were used and include a citation. For information and guidance on researching, please visit the BLC's website at [boston.gov/landmarks](http://boston.gov/landmarks).

- |                                     |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>HISTORICAL MAPS / ATLASES</b>    | 1884-1938 via <a href="http://Atlascope.leventhalmap.org">Atlascope.leventhalmap.org</a> , Boston Public Library  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>HISTORIC IMAGES</b>              | Michael J. Till, <i>Across Massachusetts's Historic Route 20</i> , Postcard History Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 10 and 13.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>BUILDING PERMITS</b>             | 1897 and 1902 permits not located; see Other below  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>DEEDS</b>                        | Suffolk Co. deeds 2447:185 (1897) and 2637:49, 51 (1899)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>PROBATE RECORDS</b>              |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>CITY DIRECTORIES</b>             | Boston city directories 1897-1965 as noted in narrative   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>CENSUS RECORDS</b>               |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>OBITUARIES</b>                   | "John Shepard 3rd," <i>The Boston Daily Globe</i> (June 12, 1950), 1:3.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>MANUSCRIPTS/DIARIES/JOURNALS</b> |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE</b>           | Boston Globe and New York Times articles (1930-2001); as noted in footnotes   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>BOOKS</b>                        | Donna L. Halper, <i>Boston Radio, 1920-2010</i> , Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 8-9.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>OTHER</b>                        | Architect information from <i>The Engineering Record</i> 36, No. 3 (June 19, 1897), 64, and <i>The American Architect and Building News</i> 25, No. 1361 (January 25, 1902), 10.<br>Bill Tarkulich, "History of Kenmore Square (2 parts)," via <a href="http://grahmjuniorcollege.com">grahmjuniorcollege.com</a> |

**We recommend this action for the following reasons:** (Include architectural and/or historical significance from the Building Inventory Form and/or additional research materials, if available. Attach additional sheets as necessary.)

Hotel Buckminster represents the development of Kenmore Square at the turn of the 20th century, and today remains the oldest historic building at the western end of the square. Used for much of its history as an apartment hotel and a tourist hotel, the Buckminster is significant for its association, from 1930 to 1968, with the growth of New England's radio broadcasting industry. The building possesses further significance for its occupation and operation, during World War II, by the U. S. Army's First Service Command, serving the six New England states from headquarters in Boston. As the location of a widely known jazz club in the early 1950s, the Buckminster is also connected with pioneering efforts in the history of jazz music promotion in New England.

Located at the intersection of Beacon Street and Brookline Avenue, the Hotel Buckminster anchors the southwestern end of Kenmore Square. The Beaux Arts/Renaissance Revival-style hotel, six stories on a raised basement, presents a prominent curved corner toward the western end of the square that complements another curved corner at the eastern end (on the Charles Rollins House, 497 Commonwealth Avenue, 1895; Bay State Road-Back Bay West Architectural Conservation District). Clad principally in red Roman brick and limestone, the Buckminster retains a number of classically derived ornamental features characteristic of Beaux Arts/Renaissance Revival design.

Two phases of construction in 1897 and 1902 created the Buckminster's wedge-shaped footprint. In the absence of original building permits, construction notices placed in period trade publications have been used to identify the architects involved. Per these notices, architect of the 1897 hotel block, or western end of the building, appears to be the notable Boston firm of Winslow and Wetherell. The 1902 construction at the eastern end of the building, featuring the curved corner that contributes significantly to the streetscape of Kenmore Square, appears to be the work of prominent Boston and New York City architect and landscape architect Guy Lowell.

Please see attached continuation sheets for more detailed information on the Hotel Buckminster's architectural details and historical significance.

#### **REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**

1. **A location map must be submitted with the petition form.** The outline of the building, structure, or site and its property boundaries (for proposed Landmarks), or the proposed District boundaries or Protection Area boundaries, must be clearly delineated. Maps may be obtained digitally, via an online mapping site, or through the City's Assessing On-line, available at [www.boston.gov/assessing](http://www.boston.gov/assessing).
2. **Include photographs of the property or district petitioned.** High quality, color photographs are preferred.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING BOSTON LANDMARKS PETITIONS

Follow these instructions when submitting a petition for a Landmark, Landmark District, Architectural Conservation District, or Protection Area. All sections of the petition must be completed in order for Commission staff to review the petition. Prospective petitioners should contact BLC staff at [BLC@boston.gov](mailto:BLC@boston.gov) for assistance when submitting a petition. For further information, see the Boston Landmarks Commission enabling legislation, Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 (sections 1 and 4), at [boston.gov/landmarks](http://boston.gov/landmarks).

Page 1.

Check the "To Designate" line unless you know that the building, site, or area to which you refer is already designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission. Any change to an existing designation, such as enlarging or reducing its size (short of outright rescission), is an amendment; in such a case check the "To Amend the Designation Of" line.

A proposed individual Landmark is identified by its complete address, in addition to any commonly used name. Ward and precinct are also required to confirm the exact location of the proposed Landmark, Landmark District, Architectural Conservation District, or Protection Area.

Most recent owner's name and address are available online at [boston.gov/assessing](http://boston.gov/assessing) via the Assessing Online function. This information is mandatory for Landmark petitions. The Commission does not require addresses for proposed Landmark Districts, Architectural Conservation Districts, or Protection Areas; however, providing this information may speed up the designation process.

The designation category for an individual building or site is "Landmark." To be considered for a Landmark designation, a property must have significance at both the local level and at the state level, New England region, or national level. To be considered for Landmark District designation, a district must have significance at the local level and at the state, New England region, or national level. A district will be considered for "Architectural Conservation District" status if its significance is at the local level. A "Protection Area" must be contiguous with an individual Landmark, Landmark District, or Architectural Conservation District and be visually related to the Landmark, Landmark District, or Architectural Conservation District and constitute an essential part of the physical environment of the individual Landmark, Landmark District, or Architectural Conservation District. A petition for the designation of a Protection Area will be considered only if an adjacent Landmark, Landmark District, or Architectural Conservation District has already been designated, or if a petition to designate an adjacent Landmark, Landmark District, or Architectural Conservation District accompanies the Protection Area petition.

Page 2.

Petitioners must be current residents and registered voters of the City of Boston. Type or print the names of the petitioners under their signatures. There must be at least 10 petitioners; attach additional pages as necessary. Please, no more than fifteen (15) petitioners. Address, ward, and precinct must be included for all petitioners. All signers must be verified by BLC staff that they are registered Boston voters; legibility is essential.

One petitioner must act as spokesperson for the group and be available for contact in case the petition requires clarification. A phone number and email address must be provided for the spokesperson.

Page 3.

Provide the City of Boston Building Inventory Form number and Survey Rating Category, if available. This information can be accessed online through the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) at <http://mhc-macris.net/> or by contacting BLC staff. DO NOT CHECK EVERY CATEGORY. In the absence of a Building Inventory Form or Survey Rating Category, contact BLC staff with a written request for a Survey Rating Category. BLC staff will assign a rating within 30 days of receiving a written request. The Commission must vote on the changed rating. Please provide staff with any relevant information that might assist in the preparation of the Survey Rating Category.

Explain briefly the architectural and/or historical merit of the proposed Landmark, Landmark District, Architectural Conservation District, or Protection Area. Attach additional pages as necessary, but note that petitions marked only “See Attached” in this area are incomplete.

A location map must be submitted with the petition form. The outline of the building, structure, or site and property boundaries (for Landmarks), or the District boundaries or Protection Area boundaries, must be clearly delineated. Maps may be obtained digitally, via an online mapping site, or through the City of Boston’s “Assessing On-line” function, available at [boston.gov/assessing](http://boston.gov/assessing).

Include photographs of the building, structure, site, or area petitioned. High quality, color photographs are preferred.

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*Draft petitions may be submitted via email to [BLC@boston.gov](mailto:BLC@boston.gov). Send as WORD document, not pdf. No multiple copies or bound draft petitions, please.*

*The Boston Landmarks Commission will not accept an incomplete petition, as noted previously. Staff will work with petitioners through the spokesperson to complete the petition. Once BLC staff determines the petition is complete, please send a pdf of the entire petition as well as a hard copy with “wet” signatures. Do not bind the hard copy petition.*

*The completed hard copy petition can be mailed or dropped off to:*

*Executive Director of the Boston Landmarks Commission  
Kirstein, 3d Floor  
20 City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02108*

*The Commission will hold a preliminary hearing with the petitioners to hear their reasons for proposing the designation. The spokesperson for the petitioners is expected to attend the preliminary hearing and present the petition to the Commission. This brief hearing is held within 30 days of the Executive Director of the Commission’s acceptance of the petition. Petitioners and owner(s) of the petitioned property will be notified of the date ten days prior, as is usual for BLC hearings. Preliminary hearings take place at regular Commission hearings, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month.*



City of Boston  
Landmarks Commission

## Hotel Buckminster Landmark Petition Form (additional information)

### Architectural Details

The original nine-bay hotel façade on Beacon Street (1897) retains a number of Beaux Arts/Renaissance Revival-style features. A rusticated two-story stone base displays arcaded window openings on the second story, ornamental stone and ironwork balustrades at principal windows, and a cornice on consoles framing bas-relief ornament above the transom window over the center entry. Corner quoins define slightly projecting end pavilions on floors three through five. A hierarchy of window ornamentation includes classical pediments on paneled pilasters framing third-story windows, plain flat lintels on the fourth and fifth stories, and architrave surrounds on the nearly square windows of the sixth story. The highly ornamental entablature incorporates consoles framing paneled metopes on the frieze, with fleur-de-lis motifs in bas relief above and acroteria providing further visual interest at the roofline. Though the Brookline Avenue (rear) elevation displays the same entablature design, the elevation is constructed principally of Roman brick, with classically styled stone ornament largely limited to window surrounds in the stories directly above the center entry. A rusticated round-arched entry opening at ground level also is constructed of brick, now painted. The first, fourth, sixth, and ninth bays of this elevation display full-height bow windows.

It is yet not clear whether all of the classical detailing present on the 1897 hotel block was installed in 1897 or 1902, when construction continued under new ownership following a period of financial difficulties for the original developer. Aside from the entablature on the 1902 section, which lacks the acroteria seen at the roofline on the 1897 block, ornament and materials are consistent on both sections. Architecturally, the major feature of the 1902 construction is the curved corner, a design solution that provided the hotel with highly visible and distinctive frontage on Kenmore Square. Further research is needed to determine how early a restaurant was installed in the curved corner commercial space previously known as 635 Beacon Street, and most recently as One Kenmore Square. A Howard Johnson's restaurant operated in the space by 1946.

### Historical Overview

Hotel Buckminster has been described variously in period sources as an apartment hotel, a family hotel, and a tourist hotel. Preliminary research suggests the Buckminster had a number of long-term residents, but also advertised to a transient clientele, especially in the decades before World War II.<sup>1</sup> A 1900 advertisement in the *Boston Herald* offered suites of two to seven rooms, outfitted with long-distance telephones, plus dining on the American plan.<sup>2</sup> Boston directories list residents of the hotel starting in 1901.

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<sup>1</sup> Hotel Buckminster, 645 Beacon Street, Fenway, Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form, No. 6 (renumbered BOS.7312 by Massachusetts Historical Commission), prepared by Edward W. Gordon, consultant (undated [1984]).

<sup>2</sup> Bill Tarkulich, "History of Kenmore Square," Part 2, Buildings and Signs, [https://grahmjuniorcollege.com/the\\_square](https://grahmjuniorcollege.com/the_square), accessed October 5, 2022.

The Buckminster's siting on two separately acquired parcels,<sup>3</sup> combined with financial difficulties for the original developers, resulted in an extended period of construction.<sup>4</sup> In June 1897, Horatio Adams, N. W. Jordan, and Arnold A. Rand, trustees of Colonial Real Estate Trust, acquired the western parcel, then vacant. The western section of the building was constructed from Beacon Street through to Brookline Avenue, though it is not clear whether all work was completed. From August 19, 1898 to September 26, 1899, five parties filed six mechanic liens for construction work unpaid, and Colonial Real Estate Trust lost the property in a mortgage foreclosure on October 5, 1899.<sup>5</sup> The western section of the Buckminster appears to have been designed by the Boston firm of Winslow and Wetherell, as an item in *The Engineering Record* notes the firm's design of a six-story brick apartment building on Beacon Street at the corner of Brookline Avenue. The owner's name is listed as A. A. Randit or Rendit, perhaps a misspelling of the surname of Colonial trustee and attorney Arnold A. Rand.<sup>6</sup>

Construction of the eastern section of the Buckminster, featuring the distinctive curved corner fronting Kenmore Square, began in 1902, according to items in *The American Architect and Building News* and *Engineering News*:

Boston, Mass. – A six-story brick and stone apartment hotel, 93' x 176', will be erected at the junction of Beacon St. and Brookline Ave., Back Bay, for the Buckminster Hotel Trust, from plans furnished by Guy Lowell, 425 Tremont Building. Work will start in the spring; cost, \$50,000.<sup>7</sup>

To be determined, if possible, with further research is whether Guy Lowell's plans for the building included any redesign of the first section, especially the exterior, aside from the extension toward Kenmore Square. Notably, the 1902 notices provide the full dimensions of the building (*i.e.*, both sections) and do not describe Lowell's commission as an addition. See significance section below for additional architect information.

Known as Four Corners when the Buckminster opened, and as Governor Square through the 1920s, Kenmore Square takes its name from the subway destination. The station itself was named for Kenmore Street, located one block east of the Buckminster. In addition to providing hotel and apartment accommodations, the Buckminster hosted a number of gatherings, from concerts, dances, and receptions to business meetings and luncheons. Typical commercial tenants in the building through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century included dress shops and tailors, barbers and beauty shops, and coffee shops and restaurants. A small number of physicians, dentists, and brokers maintained offices here.

Hotel Buckminster is the oldest hotel in the Kenmore Square area, a major center for residential and tourist hotels in Boston in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kenmore Square was the eastern terminus of U. S. Route 20, the transcontinental highway from Boston to Newport, Oregon designated in the 1920s. As Route 20 stimulated regional tourism, businesses and property owners along the route sought to

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<sup>3</sup> *Atlascope Boston*, Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library, <https://atlascope.leventhalmap.org>, accessed October 4, 2022. Bromley atlases indicate the two parcels were combined into one between 1906 and 1908.

<sup>4</sup> Compilation of the construction history also is hampered by the absence of original (1897-1902) permits for the property in Boston's building permit files and original building inspection index cards in the Commonwealth's Public Safety plans collection at the State Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Suffolk County deeds 2447:185 (1897) and 2637:49, 51 (1899); for mechanic liens, see Suffolk County grantor index 1800-1899, vol. 51-54, Cofr-Cook.

<sup>6</sup> "Building Intelligence, Boston," *The Engineering Record* 36, No. 3 (June 19, 1897):64.

<sup>7</sup> "Building Intelligence," *The American Architect and Building News* 25, No. 1361 (January 25, 1902):10; "Buildings," *Engineering News* 47, No. 10 (March 6, 1902):86.

capture the attention of auto-borne customers. A restaurant entrance was added to the Buckminster's curved corner, fronting the square, by the 1940s.

Radio station WNAC Boston maintained its broadcasting studios at the Hotel Buckminster from 1930 to 1968, using the building's 21 Brookline Avenue address (see significance). The station's founder and longtime executive director, John Shepard III (1886-1950), also established the Yankee Network, broadcasting throughout New England. A television station was added by 1953. Today, WRKO-AM 680 Boston is the successor station to WNAC. WNAC was the only tenant permitted to remain at the Buckminster when the U. S. Army took over the hotel in 1942 for the duration of World War II, housing personnel of the Boston-based First Service Command, which covered the six New England states (see significance).

The Buckminster was returned to hotel use after World War II; it appears the business also leased apartments to long-term tenants during this period. In 1950, the hotel offered daily and weekly rates for single and double occupancy, with shared baths. Special rates were available for large groups.<sup>8</sup> George Wein's Storyville, promoted as Boston's "temple of jazz," operated from the basement of the Hotel Buckminster from February 8, 1951 through September 1953 (see significance). A graduate of Northeastern University and Boston University, George Wein (1925-2021) went on to become a well known originator and promoter of jazz festivals, starting with the Newport Jazz Festival (1954) and later including the Boston Globe Jazz Festival. By the mid-1960s, Hotel Buckminster reportedly was known as the Hotel Saint George.

From 1966 to 1977, the Buckminster served as Leavitt Hall for the Cambridge School, renamed Gramh Junior College in 1968. Established in 1950 as the Boston branch of the for-profit Cambridge School of Business in New York City, the school broadened its curriculum by the 1960s to include radio and television broadcasting. Restructuring in 1968 as a non-profit institution, the school changed its name to Gramh Junior College in honor of longtime owner and benefactor, Milton L. Gramh. The new junior college awarded associate degrees and, unlike its peer institutions, enrolled a sizable population of boarding students. The school purchased the Buckminster and other buildings in the Kenmore Square vicinity for use as dormitories and classroom space. WNAC vacated the Buckminster's broadcasting studios in 1968, relocating to new studios at Government Center. The building was auctioned in 1977 in the midst of declining demand for two-year junior colleges and the deteriorating financial health of the school. Gramh Junior College closed in 1979.<sup>9</sup> The Buckminster was returned to hotel use once more, before finally closing in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Significance: Developments in New England Radio Broadcasting**

Radio broadcasting in the United States was a significant phenomenon during the Depression era as the most direct way to reach the greatest number of people in real time, with news, entertainment, sports, human interest stories, and advertising. In 1930, daily issues of *The Boston Globe* devoted pages to radio broadcasting. Coverage included program schedules for different stations, business news of radio corporations and Federal radio authorities, and studio insights, such as how the cellist of a studio orchestra can use his instrument to imitate the sound of an approaching horse's hoof beats.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Classified advertisement for the Hotel Buckminster, *The Boston Daily Globe* (March 26, 1950), C58:2.

<sup>9</sup> Bill Tarkulich, "The history of Gramh Junior College," November 2013, <https://gramhjuniorcollege.com/history>, accessed October 5, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Lloyd C. Greene, "Radio broadcasting," *The Boston Sunday Globe* (July 13, 1930), 30.

On March 5, 1930, WNAC, then also known as the Shepard Stores station, relocated its broadcasting studios, production department, and operations rooms to the Hotel Buckminster from 1 Winter Place.<sup>11</sup> Executive director John Shepard III leased the main dining hall on the first floor of the Buckminster for the outfitting of two studios: a “grand studio” for newly planned productions (large enough to accommodate a 22-piece orchestra) and a second studio for general broadcasting. The station’s executive offices and commercial department remained at 1 Winter Place.<sup>12</sup> Shepard was a wealthy entrepreneur who owned his family’s department store business, with stores in downtown Boston and Providence. He operated WNAC, which had debuted in the Boston location in July 1922. His brother, Robert Shepard, ran the sister station of WEAN Providence.<sup>13</sup>

In its first month at the Buckminster, WNAC debuted a thirty-minute weekly entertainment program, broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) to thirty-five radio stations from Maine to Texas, in what was reportedly the first radio broadcast of this scale originating in Boston. With Linus Travers of WNAC as the announcer, the premier featured The Douglas Shoe Makers orchestra from W. L. Douglas Shoe Company in Brockton, and “some of the best known entertainers in the East.” Performers included the Oscar Gart band; Earl Nelson, known as “The Prince of Crooners”; baritone John Herrick; a trio of singers led by Gordon Graham; and an unidentified Black tap dancer who performed a piece titled “Singing Feet.”<sup>14</sup>

WNAC also played a prominent role in New England advertising during the Depression era. In one example, during a special broadcast in March 1930, WNAC kicked off the radio advertising campaign for Sargon Soft Mass Pills, a patent medicine manufactured by the G. F. Willis Company, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia. The product was previously not available in New England, and WNAC spearheaded the radio launch; there was simultaneous newspaper advertising throughout the region.<sup>15</sup>

Through his Shepard Broadcasting Service and with WNAC as the linchpin, John Shepard III organized the Yankee Network in July 1930, then claimed to be the largest regional radio chain in the country outside the national networks. In addition to WNAC broadcasting from the Hotel Buckminster, the Yankee Network included WEAN Providence; WLBZ Bangor, Maine; WNBH New Bedford; WORC Worcester; and WBIS Bristol, Connecticut, located near Hartford. The Yankee Network broadcast the programs of WNAC and the national Columbia Broadcasting System. Generally, either WNAC or another sister station at the Hotel Buckminster, WAAB Boston, would broadcast CBS programs while the other transmitted the same program to other stations in the Yankee Network. The network reportedly provided radio programming more than seventeen hours daily to three million listeners within the range of its transmitters. WBIS, the smallest station in the chain, served radio listeners about two

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<sup>11</sup> Locke Wine Rooms (1891, BOS.2158), later incorporated into Locke-Ober Restaurant at 3-4 Winter Place. At the Buckminster, WNAC’s address was 21 Brookline Avenue, on the opposite side of the building from the hotel entrance.

<sup>12</sup> “Plan larger radio studio for WNAC. Move to Governor Square location in March,” *The Boston Sunday Globe*, January 26, 1930, A16:7.

<sup>13</sup> Donna L. Halper, *Boston Radio, 1920-2010, Images of America Series* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 8.

<sup>14</sup> “W. L. Douglas radio cast has its final rehearsal,” *The Boston Globe* (March 11, 1930), 8:5.

<sup>15</sup> “Sargon sales drive opened over radio,” *The Boston Globe* (March 22, 1930), 15:7; “Sargon Once a Sign of Ray City’s Prosperity,” *Ray City History Blog*, Ray City (Georgia) Community Library (February 13, 2011), <https://raycityhistory.wordpress.com/tag/g-f-willis>, accessed October 3, 2022.

hours daily, except Sundays.<sup>16</sup> Yankee Network would later expand to twenty-six stations in New England.<sup>17</sup>

John Shepard III (1886-1950) continued his innovative contributions to New England radio from his network's broadcasting headquarters at the Hotel Buckminster. In 1934, the Yankee Network began offering the Yankee News Service, delivered by experienced reporters rather than radio announcers. At this time, radio broadcasting used amplitude modulation or AM transmission. Shepard later put on the air Greater Boston's first frequency-modulated or FM station in July 1939, though FM radio would not become popular for several decades.<sup>18</sup>

By September 1953, WNAC operated both radio and television stations at the Buckminster.<sup>19</sup> The 1965 Boston directory shows WNAC, WNAC-TV, and WRKO-FM, as well as the Yankee Network, a division of RKO Broadcasting, operating at the hotel's 21 Brookline Avenue address. The stations vacated the Buckminster studios in 1968, relocated to new broadcasting studios at Government Center.<sup>20</sup>

### **Significance: United States Army, First Service Command (World War II)**

The U. S. Army took over leases at the Hotel Buckminster in September 1942 to house personnel of the First Service Command stationed at 808 Commonwealth Avenue. The Boston-based command operation covered the six New England states. While WNAC studios remained in place at the Buckminster, more than seventy-five residents, described as "permanent guests" were forced to move, including many who had lived at the hotel for nearly twenty-five years. Also evicted were three physicians' offices, a dentist, and five other businesses: two barbers, a jeweler, a hairdresser, a tire company, plus the largest tenant, the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company, which maintained offices in the building. Hancock was also the first mortgage holder on the property. Carlton Hotels, Inc. had purchased the Buckminster in 1940. Morel L. Peterson of Long Island, New York, manager and president-treasurer of the Carlton corporation, had offered hotel properties to the federal government for war purposes.<sup>21</sup>

During World War II, Hotel Buckminster was one of at least four Boston hotels taken over by the Army or Navy to house armed services personnel. The other hotels, which were occupied by Navy personnel, included Hotel Victoria on Dartmouth Street, Hotel Brunswick on Boylston Street, and Hotel Somerset on Commonwealth Avenue.<sup>22</sup> The Buckminster also served as one of the headquarters locations for the U. S. Army's Military Police (MP) during the war. While at least one captured Army deserter was imprisoned there,<sup>23</sup> the most infamous detainees were fifty-four officers and seamen serving on the German submarine U-805. Having surrendered their U-boat to U. S. authorities in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on May 15, 1945 the German prisoners were bussed under Marine guard to the Buckminster, where they were processed before being transported to prisons in the U. S. South. Their arrival drew a hostile crowd of several hundred people to Kenmore Square, reportedly with no violence.

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<sup>16</sup> "Yankee' Network becomes reality due to enterprise of John Shepard 3<sup>rd</sup>," *The Boston Sunday Globe* (July 13, 1930), 30:7; John Barry, "Radio control man busier than the paper hanger of the proverb," *The Boston Sunday Globe* (March 20, 1932), A18:4. The latter article describes in detail the complexity of transmitting radio programs, which was undertaken at the Hotel Buckminster.

<sup>17</sup> "John Shepard 3<sup>rd</sup>, pioneer in radio broadcasting, dies," *The Boston Daily Globe* (June 12, 1950), 1:3.

<sup>18</sup> Halper, *Boston Radio*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> "Flood nearly puts radio station off the air," *The Boston Daily Globe* (September 9, 1953), 3:3.

<sup>20</sup> Bill Tarkulich, "The history of Graham Junior College."

<sup>21</sup> "Another hotel here taken over by government," *The Boston Daily Globe* (August 19, 1942), 1:1.

<sup>22</sup> "Hotel Victoria to house WAVES," *The Boston Daily Globe* (August 27, 1942), 1:6.

<sup>23</sup> "Army deserted hid in Brockton home 18 months," *The Boston Daily Globe* (December 18, 1944), 1:3.

During the war, the Army also maintained a Personnel Affairs Office at the Buckminster, providing assistance to servicemen and their families until its relocation in October 1945.<sup>24</sup>

### **Significance: Storyville Jazz Club**

George Wein's Storyville, promoted as Boston's "temple of jazz," operated from the basement of the Hotel Buckminster from February 8, 1951 through September 1953. Previously, Wein ran the club from the Copley Square Hotel, returning there after 2½ years at the Buckminster. Storyville operated through the 1950s, ending its run at the Hotel Bradford on Tremont Street.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to being club proprietor, George Wein was a pianist who performed at Storyville regularly with members of his quartet. Main attractions booked while Storyville operated at the Buckminster included Lee Wiley, "the songstress ... called a great interpreter of Gershwin tunes";<sup>26</sup> Boston native Rudi Vanelli, known in jazz circles for his guitar playing before concentrating on classical guitar;<sup>27</sup> and Grammy Award-winning Ella Fitzgerald, the most popular female jazz singer in the nation for more than fifty years, who closed out the winter season at the Buckminster in May 1952.<sup>28</sup> During this period, Storyville relocated to Gloucester during the summer months. After a fire there in August 1952 destroyed the cottage of Storyville musicians, with their instruments, a benefit show was held in Boston at the Buckminster. Featured performers were clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, trumpeter Frankie Newton, and conductor, composer, and Massachusetts native Leonard Bernstein on piano.<sup>29</sup> George Shearing, the blind British jazz pianist and composer who had recently immigrated to the United States, performed at Storyville with members of his quintet on New Year's Eve in 1952.<sup>30</sup>

Born in Lynn and raised in Newton, George Wein (1925-2021; the surname is pronounced *Ween*) attended Northeastern University and graduated from Boston University in 1950 after serving in the Army during World War II. He had steady work as a jazz pianist in Boston before becoming a full-time club owner. Wein was a pioneering force in the outdoor jazz festival business, starting with his founding of the Newport Jazz Festival (1954) and including the Boston Globe Jazz Festival (1966 onward), the latter produced with Boston-area concert promoter Harry Paul. Wein's talents also extended to producing folk festivals.<sup>31</sup> George Wein reimagined the Storyville tradition in 1976, when he opened a jazz club of the same name in New York City, where he then resided.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Crowd reviles Nazis at Hotel Buckminster," *The Boston Daily Globe* (May 17, 1945), 3:2; "Personnel Affairs Office to Move," *The Boston Sunday Globe* (October 14, 1945), D3:8.

<sup>25</sup> Ted Ashby, "Sitting in – memo to Dixieland rooters," *The Boston Daily Globe* (February 8, 1951), 19:1; John William Riley, "The jazz beat," *The Boston Daily Globe* (September 29, 1953), 4:7.

<sup>26</sup> "Lee Wiley at Storyville," *The Daily Boston Globe* (February 11, 1952), 10:4.

<sup>27</sup> "Lee Wiley at Storyville."

<sup>28</sup> John William Riley, "Notes of music," *The Boston Daily Globe* (May 15, 1952), 7:5; "Biography – Ella Fitzgerald," <https://www.ellafitzgerald.com>, accessed October 5, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> John William Riley, "Musical benefit," *The Boston Daily Globe* (August 13, 1952), 22:8.

<sup>30</sup> "Big New Year's Augmented by Advance Reservations," *The Boston Daily Globe* (December 28, 1952), C10:7.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Keepnews, "George Wein, Newport Jazz Festival trailblazer, is dead at 95," *The New York Times* (September 13, 2021, updated September 16, 2021); John Leland, "At home with George Wein: Art, life, and all that jazz," *The New York Times* (August 2, 2001), F1:1; William Buchanan, "Harry Paul, promoted festivals, nightclubs, entertainers; at 81," *The Boston Globe* (December 18, 1990), 41:1.

<sup>32</sup> Ernie Santosuosso, "Jazzman Wein unveils festival dates, new club," *The Boston Globe* (January 23, 1976), 20:1.

## **Significance: Architecture Firms of Winslow & Wetherell and Guy Lowell**

Preliminary research indicates the Boston architecture firm of Winslow and Wetherell designed the 1897 section of the Hotel Buckminster, while Boston architect and landscape architect Guy Lowell designed the construction undertaken in 1902. Further research may be able to establish whether Lowell's commission included any work on the exterior design of the 1897 section of the hotel, though the absence of both original building permits and the Commonwealth's building inspection index cards for the Buckminster complicates this effort.

Numerous secondary sources attribute the design of the Buckminster to Stanford White, FAIA (1853-1906), then a partner in the New York City firm of McKim, Mead and White. Further research is needed to confirm a period source for this information. His firm designed several Boston buildings during the period of the Buckminster's construction, among them the Boston Public Library at Copley Square (1888, BOS.2624, NHL); Symphony Hall on Massachusetts Avenue (1900, BOS.7524, NHL); and Harvard Stadium on North Harvard Street (1903, BOS.8286, NHL).

The firm of **Winslow and Wetherell** played a significant role in shaping the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century streetscape in the central business district, especially the Ladder Blocks east of Boston Common, and Piano Row south of the Common. Walter T. Winslow, AIA (1843-1909), a Boston native, studied architecture with Nathaniel J. Bradlee, completing his studies in Paris and returning to Boston, where he was employed in Bradlee's firm as a draftsman and later junior partner. Bradlee and Winslow designed a large number of commercial buildings constructed in the aftermath of Boston's 1872 fire. The partnership expanded in 1884 to include George H. Wetherell, FAIA (1854-1930), who studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Following Bradlee's death in 1888, the name of the firm was changed to Winslow and Wetherell. It operated as Winslow, Wetherell and Bigelow from 1898 to 1901, with Henry Forbes Bigelow, FAIA (1867-1929) as the newest partner. Bigelow, also a graduate of the MIT architecture program, had been associated with Winslow and Wetherell since 1888.

In addition to the Baker Chocolate Company factory in Dorchester (1880s-1910s, BOS.6747, NRDIS), notable surviving examples of Winslow and Wetherell's work include the Auchmuty Building on Kingston Street (1889, BOS.1819); the Steinert Hall office, showroom, and concert hall complex on Boylston Street (1896, BOS.2260; NRDIS); the Proctor Building on Bedford Street (1897, BOS.1558); the Jewelers Building on Washington Street (1897, BOS.2131); and the Hotel Touraine on Boylston Street (1897, BOS.2248), with which Bigelow also was involved. The best known project of Winslow, Wetherell and Bigelow was the steel-frame South Street Building (1899, BOS.1982; NRDIS).<sup>33</sup>

**Guy Lowell, FAIA** (1870-1927) graduated from Harvard College (1892) and the architecture program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1894). He trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts from 1895 to 1899, studying architectural history, architectural design, and landscape gardening before returning to Boston and opening his own firm. Lowell designed commercial and institutional buildings, grand estate houses, and formal gardens. His success, particularly among prominent families such as his own in Boston, led to the opening of a second office in New York City. He is known most widely for designing the Boston Museum of Fine Arts on Huntington Avenue (1907-1914, BOS.7493), as well as the New York State Supreme Court on Centre Street in Manhattan (1913, built 1919-1925). Lowell's Boston work includes additional buildings and structures in the Fenway and Longwood vicinity, among

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<sup>33</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission, *Report on the Potential Designation of The Parker House, 60 School Street, Boston, as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as Amended* (draft report posted November 1, 2021).

them the Johnson Memorial Gates at the Fenway's Westland Avenue entrance (1901-1902, BOS.9271) and the MFA's associated Museum School on the Fenway (1926, BOS.7407). Between 1905 and 1907, Guy Lowell also designed three buildings constructed on the Simmons College Residence Campus (BOS.AEM): South Hall (BOS.7358), the dining hall or Refectory/Alumnae Hall (BOS.7581), and North Hall (BOS.7580). Previously, he had designed about twenty new buildings on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover (1902-1903).<sup>34</sup>

Notable for his landscape work, Guy Lowell served as architect and landscape architect on the Charles River Dam project (1910), which created the Charles River Basin, and in 1908 redesigned Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.'s 1892 Charlesbank plan, yielding the Esplanade from Charles Circle to the Harvard Bridge. Lowell founded a landscape architecture program at MIT that operated from 1900 to 1910, and donated his time as a teacher.<sup>35</sup>

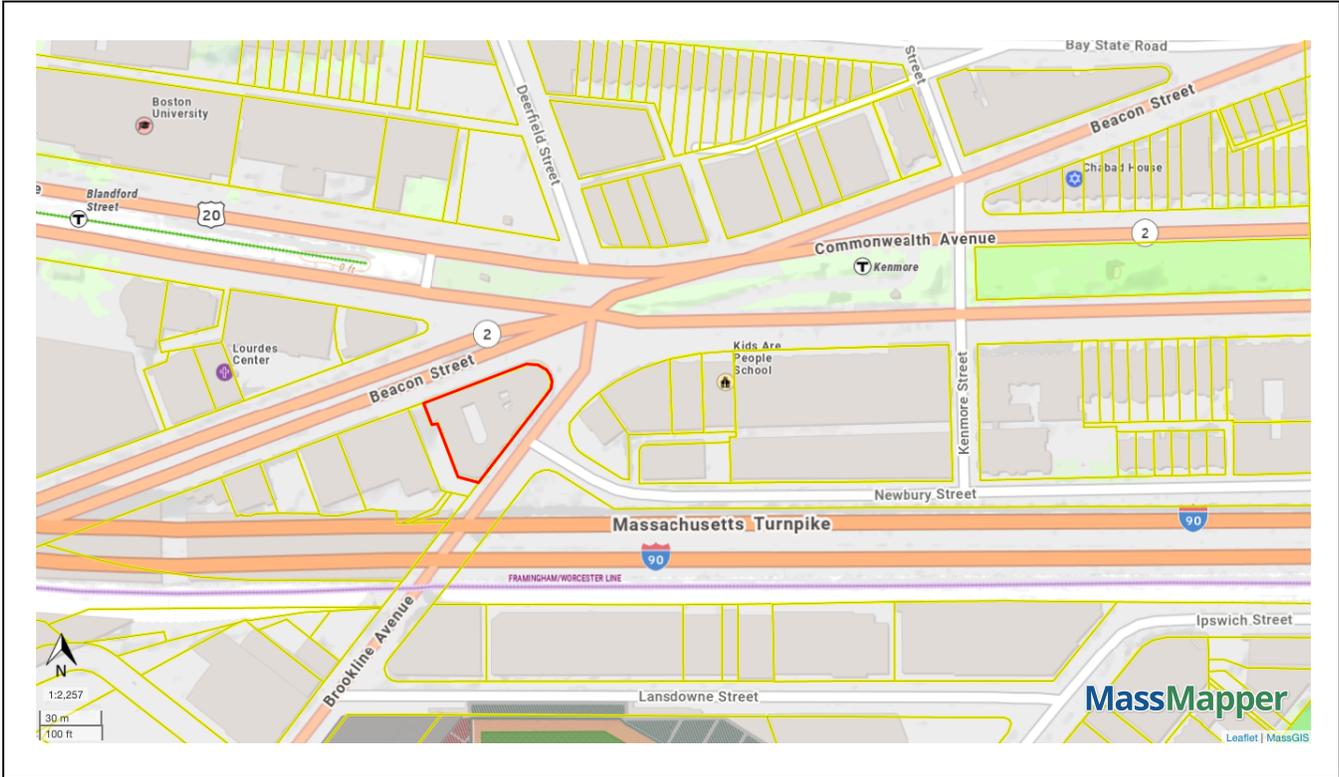
*Preliminary research on the Hotel Buckminster compiled by preservation consultant Kathleen Kelly Broomer for the Boston Preservation Alliance (October 5, 2022).*

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<sup>34</sup> Simmons College Residence Campus, Longwood Medical Area, Massachusetts Historical Commission area form BOS.AEM, prepared by Kathleen Kelly Broomer and Wendy Frontiero, consultants (December 2017); New York State Supreme Courthouse, Department of Citywide Administrative Services, City of New York, NY, accessed October 5, 2022 via <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/business/dcasmanagedbuildings/new-york-state-supreme-courthouse>; "Guy Lowell, Pioneer Information," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/guy-lowell>, accessed October 4, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> "Guy Lowell, Pioneer Information."

**Location Maps** (showing boundaries of parcel number 0504150000 in red)



Photographs



View southwest from Kenmore Square – Brookline Ave (left) and Beacon St (right)



View southeast from Beacon St – façade of 1897 hotel block



Beacon St façade – entry detail



View east from Beacon St



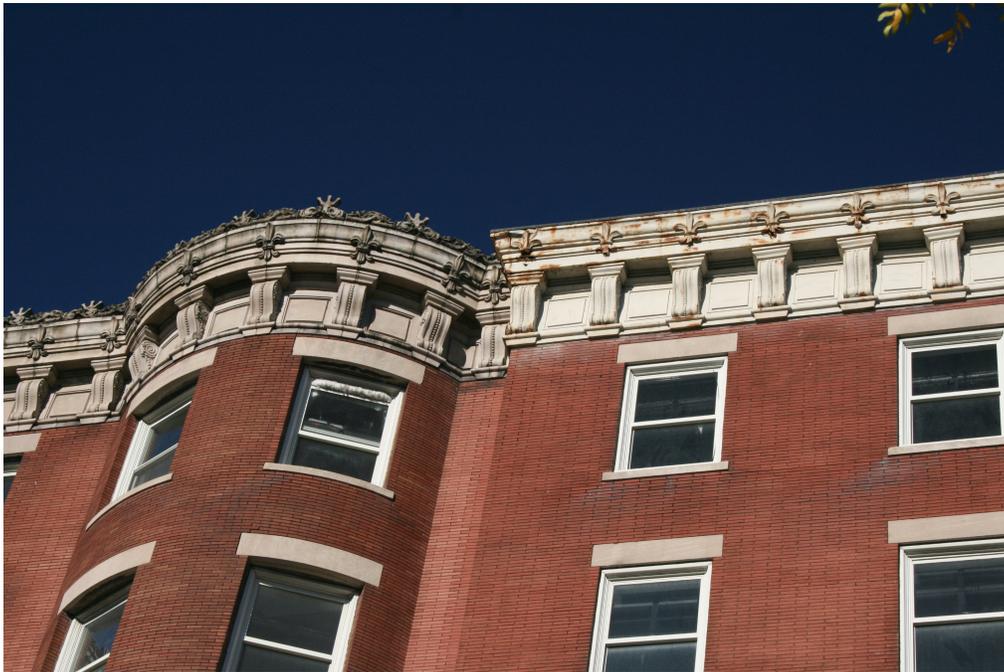
View south-southwest from Kenmore Square, showing Brookline Ave elevation



Brookline Ave elevation – entry bay detail with painted brick



Brookline Ave elevation detail



1897 (left) and 1902 entablatures



View west from Commonwealth Ave – Hotel Buckminster at center



View northeast on Beacon St toward Kenmore Square – Hotel Buckminster at right