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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 2:32 PM
BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Building Information Form

Form No. 1731

86-102 Arch St.

ADDRESS Franklin St. COR. 199-201 Devonshire

New England Merchants Boston Safe Deposit

NAME National Bank and Trust Company

present original

MAP No. 25N/13E SUB AREA Financial

DATE 1908-11 Building permit 11/20/1908

source

ARCHITECT Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (permit)

source

BUILDER Norcross Brothers Co. (permit)

source

Boston Safe Deposit

OWNER and Trust Company

original present

PHOTOGRAPHS 7 2/3 80

fire (residential) single double row 2-fam. 3-deck ten apt.

(non-residential) commercial (bank & offices)

NO. OF STORIES (1st to cornice) 10 plus

ROOF flat cupola dormers

MATERIALS (Frame) clapboards shingles stucco asphalt asbestos alum/vinyl

(Other) brick stone/marble concrete iron/steel/alum.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION Beaux Arts early skyscraper, U-plan above 3 rd

with U facing Arch St. 5-bay principal facade on Franklin follows curve of street. Level

1 has 3 center 2-story arches with heavy keystones & modern sash, flanked

by iron torchiers. Main entrance in center bay, 2nd entrance offset left.

Side bays have entablatures supported on console brackets; cartouches above.

Name band above arches flanked by eagles & inscriptions "A.D.1875" and "A.D.

EXTERIOR ALTERATION (minor) moderate drastic 1908."Row of 10 1/1 windows at 3

floor alterations) followed by cornice, 7-story shaft.

CONDITION good fair poor

LOT AREA 12,000 sq. feet

Orig. bldg. name on frieze; dentil cornice.

NOTEWORTHY SITE CHARACTERISTICS Prominently sited, curved-front building in

U-plan. Side facades on Arch & Devonshire are very similar to Franklin, all

have original 1st fl. iron window grates.

SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd on reverse)

Monumental Beaux Arts bank office building with all-marble facades in pristine condition;

notable for its prominent location, curved front facade and restrained Beaux Arts detail-

ing; significant as the work of a nationally-

known Boston architectural firm for a leading

Boston financial institution.

Architects George Foster Shepley (1860-1903),

Charles H. Rutan (1851-1914) and Charles A.
Coolidge (1858-1936) were all employed in the office of the eminent Boston architect H.H. Richardson and upon his death in 1886 formed a partnership to complete Richardson's unfinished work. They became nationally known and designed such distinguished Boston buildings as the Ames Building, Chamber of Commerce, and South Station Terminal.

The builder of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company, Norcross Brothers, is also well-known in connection with Richardson buildings such as Trinity Church. This firm of master builders has traditionally been praised for their fine workmanship and technical excellence.

86-102 Franklin was constructed for the Boston Safe Deposit Company, which was established in 1875 and remained at this location at least through the 1960's.

According to the Architectural Club Yearbook, the exterior stone used in this building is Plateau white marble from the quarries of Norcross-West Marble Company, Dorset, Vermont.

Preservation Consideration (accessibility, re-use possibilities, capacity for public use and enjoyment, protection, utilities, context)

Part of suggested "Commercial Palace" National Register District.

Part of Commercial Palace
National Register District
D.O.E. 9-5-85

Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

1. Rental brochure dated 1926 with illustration, statement of assets and floorplan, Rice-Mank collection, Bostonian Society.
3. Architectural Club Yearbook, 1909, p. 221 (adv. with illus); also architects rendering and plans for 1st and 2nd floors (no page #)
The Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company has been in active business since 1875. The Company has a paid up capital of $1,000,000. The officers of the Company are: Charles E. Rogerson, president, William H. Wellington, vice-president, William C. Williams, vice-president, and George E. Goodspeed, treasurer.
Franklin St. cor Devonshire, showing Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co. Bldg. #100 Franklin St, betw. Arch (left) and Devonshire St.
INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE

86-102 Franklin St.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts  02125

HISTORIC BUILDING NAME: New England Merchants National Bank / Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company

CURRENT BUILDING NAME: 56-60 Arch Street, 199-201 Devonshire

ASSOCIATED ADDRESSES: 56-60 Arch Street, 199-201 Devonshire

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIG CODE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRDOE</td>
<td>9/5/1985</td>
<td>Commercial Palace Historic District</td>
</tr>
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CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS TO PAGE 1 BASE INFORMATION

Assessors Parcel ID: 0304666000
Assessors Address: 201 Devonshire St.
Current Owner: Franklin Street Holdings, LLC
Building Date: 1903

RECORDED BY: Larson Fisher Associates, Woodstock, NY

ORGANIZATION: Boston Landmarks Commission

DATE: May / 2012

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

There are no apparent alterations to this building since it was documented on the 1980 Inventory form.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historically known as 100 Franklin Street, the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company Building was constructed on land purchased from the J. Montgomery Sears estate (see BOS.1689), which had historically housed banking houses, including the Revere Bank. Sears (1854-1905) was the only son of prominent East-India merchant Joshua Sears (1791-1857), who built a fortune in trade and real estate investment.1 After successfully challenging his father’s will in 1877 upon reaching majority, Sears became the direct owner of numerous “gilt edged” commercial properties in the “Commercial Palace” District. Sears was a successful investor in his own right and after his death much of the real estate was held in trust for the benefit of his heirs, a wife, Sarah Carlisle Choate, son, J. Montgomery, Jr. and a daughter, Helen.2

Upon purchase of all six building lots shortly after the death of Sears, the land was cleared in order to construct the new ten-story structure. The Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company was founded as the Boston Safe Deposit Company through a charter granted by the State Legislature in 1865 and incorporated in 1867 to act as an executor and administrator. In 1875 the name was changed to its final form and the company’s capital increased by legislative act to $400,000 and it was granted the “power to act as administrator, executor, and in other fiduciary relations.” The bank was located in a new building at 87 Milk Street and run by a staff of eight. By the end of the century the bank’s capital had been increased to $1 million and its assets under management to $15.5 million.3 The growth of the institution resulted in the construction of 100 Franklin Street in 1912.

The bank’s incorporators included Samuel Hurd Walley (1805-1877) and William Endicott (1826-1914). Walley was a Harvard educated (1826) banker who sat on various corporate boards, mainly railroads, and who represented the Whig Party in the state legislature, serving as Speaker of the House 1845-46. He also served in the U.S. Congress in 1853-55. He ran for Governor in 1855 but was defeated.4 Endicott, of 33 Beacon Street, was a partner in the C. F. Hovey Department Store, a rival of Jordan Marsh, and sat on many corporate boards, mainly banks.5 Founding board members included several successful bankers and real estate investors including Charles Francis Adams (see BOS.1739), Nathaniel J. Bradlee (associated with the Fifty

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4 Boston Daily Globe, Aug. 29, 1877.
5 Boston Daily Globe, April 13, 1914.
Early officers of the bank included its first president, Francis M. Johnson (1822-1878) and vice president Francis Dane (1819-1873). Both were prominent in the leather industry; Johnson as a factor (in charge of shipping) in Johnson, Eaton & Co., located at 242 Purchase Street, and Dane in the Massachusetts shoe manufacturing industry. Johnson, a Mayflower descendant, was born in Kingston, Massachusetts, educated in a Quaker School (Society of Friends) in Sandwich, and served in the state legislature and state senate in 1856 and 1862, respectively. Dane was an important innovator in the development of the shoe industry in Danvers, manufacturing brogans for the southern market. Brogans were a primitive and cheap shoe that was sold to plantation owners for use by slaves. Their manufacture was a first tier in the development of the nationally prominent New England shoe industry centered in Essex County in Haverhill and Lynn during the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. When the southern market collapsed at the start of the Civil War, Dane made a fortune manufacturing brogans for the Union Army. His position in the bank was an outgrowth of his role on numerous boards in the shoe and other Boston industries.

Subsequent officers included Frederick M. Stone, president 1877-1897 and William E. Putnam, president 1897-1905. Stone (1825-1897) lived on Lexington Street in Waltham and was a locally active lawyer and banker, serving as president of the Waltham National Bank until he moved to Boston Safe. He served as the first state Commissioner of Savings Banks under Governor Bullock, 1868-1875. His death in office was attributed to stress caused by an embezzlement scandal which attached itself to the bank when its treasurer, Frank C. Niles (b. 1834), who passed his entire career at the bank from its founding, syphoned assets amounting to approximately $150,000 to speculate in the stock market. When Niles’ ruse was uncovered he disappeared, only to be captured almost a decade later in 1905 in Cape Town, South Africa. William E. Putnam, a member of the prominent Danvers family of financiers and shoe manufacturers with a genealogy that intersects with the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, began his career at the First National Bank of Danvers. He was the father of the Boston architect William E. Putnam, Jr. (apparently no relation to noted architect J. Pickering Putnam).

The bank was managed by Charles E. Rogerson for the next 27 years, who died at his desk of a heart attack in 1932. He was a Boston native and lived in Milton. He left behind six children. All four of his sons were associated with banking in Boston.

Tenants:
Throughout its history the bank occupied most of the building with the exception of several lawyer’s offices in the upper-most stories, that of James Otis and Herbert Schnare. In 1981 the bank became a subsidiary of Shearson, Lehman, Inc. By 1970, however, the bank had vacated the building, which remained vacant until it was tenanted by offices of New England Merchant’s National Bank (Bank of New England) during the 1980s, which subsequently failed as well in 1991. The Webster Financial Center is currently the main occupant of the building.

Shepley Rutan & Coolidge, Architect:
George F. Shepley, Charles H. Rutan, and Charles A. Coolidge formed their architectural partnership in 1886 following the death of their mentor and employer, Henry Hobson Richardson. The young firm made its initial reputation in completing many of the unfinished projects left in the Richardson office; however, the partners would go on to establish their own independent status as one of Boston’s most prestigious architectural firms. Senior partner George Foster Shepley (1860-1903) met an untimely death at age 43 years. Born and educated in St. Louis, Missouri, he graduated from Washington University in 1880 and then attended the architecture school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Immediately upon the completion of his studies, Shepley joined the studio of Henry Hobson Richardson as a draftsman, and he remained with the firm until Richardson’s death in 1886. In that same year he had married Richardson’s daughter, Julia. Charles Hercules Rutan (1851-1914) was born in Newark, New Jersey, and at age eighteen began his architectural training in the office of Gambrill and Richardson in Boston. By the time

1 Boston Daily Globe, June 22, 1875.
Richardson died in 1886, Charles H. Rutan was one of his chief designers. His younger brother, Frank E. Rutan (1861-1911), was later employed by the Richardson office under the same terms and continued in partnership with his brother until forming a partnership with Frederick A. Russell in 1896 in Pittsburgh, where he had gone to supervise the construction of the Allegheny County Court House, one of Richardson’s unfinished projects.¹⁴ Charles Allerton Coolidge (1858-1936) was a native Bostonian and received a degree from Harvard College in 1881 before entering the architecture school at M.I.T. From there he went directly into Richardson’s office for his architectural training.

One of the first commissions awarded to Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge was in 1899 for the Chamber of Commerce Building in Boston, which echoed the design of the Chamber of Commerce in Cincinnati, Ohio, developed in Richardson’s office while he was still alive. The Ames Building in Boston was designed in a similar manner at about the same time. When completed, the Ames Building was the tallest in the city, and the architects moved their offices into the top floor. In 1890 the campus plan design for Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, and the first buildings on that campus were awarded to Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge. The firm received two important commissions in Chicago, the Art Institute in 1892 and the public library in 1893. Other building projects included the New England Building in Cleveland, Ohio (1897); the South Terminal Station (1899) and the Back Bay Station (1900) in Boston; the United States Building at the Paris Exposition in France (1900); Stillman Infirmary at Harvard (1901); Chapel at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York (1902); the library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island (1903); Harvard Medical School in Boston (1903-1907); First Congregational Church, Fall River (1911-1913); and the Merchant’s National Bank Building, Y.M.C.A. Building, and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and three freshman dormitories at Harvard University (1913-1914).¹⁵

After his two partners’ deaths, Charles A. Coolidge specialized in the design of academic buildings at colleges and universities such as Nebraska State University, University of Kentucky and the University of Chicago where, in the latter case, there are many buildings associated with him. By 1917, Coolidge formed a partnership with George C. Shattuck (1864-1923), a long-standing draftsman in the office. They designed Sprague Memorial Hall at Yale University in that year. Coolidge was sent to China by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1917 to identify a site and plan a hospital and medical school for the China Medical Board. While overseas, he also consulted on building projects in Peking and Constantinople. In 1922 Coolidge & Shattuck were awarded a Medal of Honor by the Boston Society of Architects recognizing the design of the Lying-in-Hospital as the most meritorious building erected in the city that year.¹⁶

In 1925 Coolidge organized a new partnership at his Ames Building office with Henry R. Shepley, the son of his former associate, Francis V. Bulfinch, and Lewis B. Abbott. Even at this late stage in his career, he continued to direct the design of hospitals and academic buildings throughout the country. A number of buildings designed by the firm were added to Harvard’s campus, including those for a new law school, dormitories and the Collis Huntington Memorial Hospital. In 1906 Harvard bestowed on him an honorary Doctor of Arts degree in recognition of his contributions to the institution. Coolidge was a long-time member and past president of the Boston Society of Architects and was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1891. He also served as a director of the American Federation of the Arts and a trustee of the American Academy in Rome.¹⁷

Norcross Brothers, Builder:
Norcross Brothers Contractors and Builders was a prominent nineteenth-century American construction company, especially noted for their work, mostly in stone, for the architectural firms of H. H. Richardson and McKim, Mead & White. James Atkinson Norcross and Orlando Whitney Norcross were sons of Jesse Springer Norcross and Margaret Whitney born in Clinton, Maine, in 1831 and 1839, respectively. Their father, a native of Wayne, Maine, was proprietor of Norcross Mills and for many years constructed saw-mills in the lumber districts of the “Pine Tree State.” He died at Benicia, California, in 1850, where he had gone in search of gold. Their mother was a native of Westborough, Massachusetts. After a period of learning and the interruption of the Civil War, the brothers started a building business in 1864. Their first contract of more than ordinary consequence was for the construction of the Congregational Church in Leicester, and soon after they erected another church in North Adams. Located in Worcester, the business increased steadily with the building of the Crompton Block, the First Universalist Church, and the Classical and English high schools during the years 1866-1870 and, later, with the State Mutual Life Assurance Building, the

¹⁴ ibid., p. 534.
¹⁵ ibid.
¹⁶ ibid.
¹⁷ ibid.
Art Museum, and the new City Hall. Other notable specimens of their workmanship in Worcester are the All Saints' Church and the Burnside Building.

In that same period (1868-1870), the Norcross Brothers firm also erected between seventy and eighty buildings in different parts of the region including the South Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. The firm constructed the Hampden County Court House in 1872 and in 1873 it constructed Henry Hobson Richardson’s design for Trinity Church in Boston. Subsequently they executed other notable Richardson projects: the Congregational Church in Norwich, Connecticut; the Cheney Block in Hartford, Connecticut; the Latin and English high schools in Boston; the Gymnasium and Sever Hall at Harvard College; the Ames Library and Town Hall in North Easton, Massachusetts; the Library in Woburn, Massachusetts; Trinity Church parsonage in Boston; and the Newport villa of Mrs. Annie W. Sherman. During the 1880s they extended their operations across the country, building the City Hall at Albany, New York; the Allegheny County Court House and Jail in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the Chamber of Commerce Building in Cincinnati, Ohio; the Howard Memorial Library in New Orleans; the Turner and Lionberger Buildings in St. Louis, Missouri; the Marshall Field Building in Chicago; the New York Life Insurance buildings in Omaha, Nebraska, and Kansas City, Missouri; a Presbyterian Church in Albany, New York; the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey; and Crouse Memorial College in Syracuse, New York.

The Norcross Brothers also built the Yale Memorial Building; Harvard College Law School Building; Vermont University Building in Burlington; the Durfee High School in Fall River; Crane Memorial Hall in Quincy; the Malden Library, Malden; the Fiske Building; Syndicate Building, and other business structures in Boston, as well as the First Spiritual Temple and the Algonquin and Art Clubs in the city; the South Framingham and Springfield stations on the Boston & Albany Railroad, and the Union Railroad Station in Hartford, Connecticut; the Baptist Church in Newton, and Grace Church in New Bedford. In New York City the firm built the Union League Club, Union Theological Seminary, and St. James' Episcopal and Holy Trinity Churches. It also constructed the Soldiers' Monument at West Point, New York, the largest polished monolith in the world, and the Ames Memorial Monument at Sherman, Wyoming, on the highest elevation of the Rocky Mountains crossed by the Union Pacific railroad. In addition, Norcross Brothers built lavish private residences in various cities throughout the country too numerous to list.

Their later work includes the Ames Building, Chamber of Commerce Building, Tremont Building, Youth's Companion Building, Devonshire Building, State House Extension, Exchange Building, Union Station, all in Boston; the Industrial Building, Telephone Building, and Banigan Building in Providence, Rhode Island; as well as the Rhode Island State House; the Equitable Building in Baltimore; New England Building in Cleveland, Ohio; and the Society for Savings Building in Hartford. Their academic buildings include the Dormitory Building and Commencement Hall at Princeton College; Perkins Hall, Conant Hall and Fogg Art Museum at Harvard College; Teachers College Butler Library, Physics and Natural Sciences Buildings at Columbia College in New York; and Chemical and Physical Laboratory, Amherst College. Norcross Brothers built the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the residence of the late Colonel Elliot F. Shepard in Scarborough, New York; and the Bloomingdale Asylum in White Plains, New York.

Their facilities were both numerous and varied and extended to wood and iron working shops in Worcester, stone-yards in Boston, and Cleveland, Ohio, and granite, sandstone, slate and marble quarries in different states. On January 1, 1897, Orlando W. Norcross purchased his brother's interest in the business. Orlando W. Norcross and his wife, Ellen P. Sibley of Salem, Massachusetts, lived in Worcester with their three living children: Alice Whitney, Mabel Ellen and Edith Janet.18

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Public Records
Boston MA, City of Boston Inspectional Services Department, Building Permit Records http://cityofboston.gov/isd.

Maps
Hale, J. G. *Map of Boston*. 1814

Secondary Sources
Boston City Directories. 1845-1960.
Boston MA. Boston Public Library. Architect Index.

*Boston Evening Transcript*. Microfilm on file at the Boston Landmarks Commission, Boston City Hall.

Internet Sources

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES and LOCATIONAL INFORMATION

Assessors Map (north at top)

Detail of decorative window hood/surround.
Photographs
(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2011 unless otherwise noted)

View from southwest; Arch St. facade on left, Franklin St. facade on right.
Arch St. facade, view from northwest.

Devonshire St. facade, view from northeast.
1. Is this structure historically significant to:
   Town Commonwealth Nation

   Structure has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

   Agriculture Commerce/Industry
   Architecture Science/Invention
   Art/Sculpture Travel/Communication
   Education Military Affairs
   Government Religion/Philosophy
   Literature Indians
   Music Development of Town/City

2. Town Boston
   Street 100 Franklin Street
   Name Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co.

   Original Use Office Building
   Present Use

   Present Owner

   Date 1908 Style

   Source of Date

   Architect Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered

   IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by

4. DESCRIPTION

   FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material:
   WALL COVER: Wood Brick Stone Other
   STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular
   ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency Simple/Complex
   PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony Recessed
   ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork
   FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament
   Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features:
   Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied
   Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured

5. OUTBUILDINGS LANDSCAPING

   5. Indicate location of structure on map below

   6. Footage of structure from street

   Property has ______ feet frontage on street

   Recorder 2.D.K.

   For

   Photo

   NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form.
GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

The curved facade of this building, following the line of Franklin St., reflects the plan of Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent which had earlier occupied the site.

REFERENCE (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

Boston Athenaeum - B.H.C.C.