

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	BOS.1618
Historic Name:	Massachusetts Health, Welfare and Education Center
Common Name:	Boston Government Service Center
Address:	115 Cambridge St 25 Staniford and New Chardon Sts
City/Town:	Boston
Village/Neighborhood:	Central Business District; Government Center
Local No:	0301686000
Year Constructed:	r 1965
Architect(s):	Dyer, Michael A. Company; Rudolph, Paul Marvin; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott; Vappi and Company
Architectural Style(s):	Not researched
Use(s):	Business Office; Doctor Or Dentist Office; Library; Other Governmental or Civic; Parking Garage
Significance:	Architecture; Education; Health Medicine; Landscape Architecture; Politics Government
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Wall: Concrete Unspecified



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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: Monday, November 11, 2019 at 12:59 PM

Moved; date if known _____

Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community/ development	_____				

Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

project of the 1960's and 70's. The Center was conceived by coordinating architect Paul Rudolph as a unified grouping of three buildings around a pedestrian plaza which has been compared in architectural periodicals to the Piazza of San Marco in Venice and Piazza del Campo in Venice.² Of the three planned buildings listed below, only the first two have been built. The last is conceived as a 28-story tower.

- 1) Hurley Employment Security Building (Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, architects)-completed
- 2) Lindemann Mental Health Building (Desmond & Lord, architects. Paul Rudolph, architectural design)-completed
- 3) Health, Welfare & Education Building (arch-M.A. Kyer & Pederson & Tilney, Paul Rudolph, architectural design)

The principal architect, Paul Rudolph, is known for his "individual, vigorous expressionism"⁵ He was born in Kentucky in 1918, studied architecture at Alabama Polytechnic Institute and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and in 1958 was appointed Chairman of the Dept. of Architecture at Yale. Among his Boston area works are the Jewett Art Center at Wellesley College (1958) and the Blue Cross-Blue Shield Office Preservation Consideration (accessibility, re-use possibilities, capacity Bldg. on for public use and enjoyment, protection, utilities, context) Summer St. in Boston. 5

Recommended for individual listing on National Register and designation (exterior and selected interior) as Boston Landmark. (9/90)

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

1. Boston Architecture, Boston Society of Architects, Donald Freeman, ed. MIT Press, 1970.
2. Progressive Architecture, Feb. 1964, vol. 45, p. 62-64 (illus, plans)
3. Architectural Record, June, 1966, vol. 139, p. 140-141 (illus, plans)
4. Architecture Boston, Boston Society of Architects, 1976.
5. Paul Heyer, Architects on Architecture; New Directions in America, (Walker & Co, 1978) p. 295-306. Includes model & discussion of the Gov. Services Center.

1618.
CBP

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DIVISION OF INSPECTION

PLAN RECORD

CASE RACK 1 APART. 10 NO. 81526
BUILDING Garage Plaza & Landscaping STORIES
CITY OR TOWN Health, Welfare & Education
Service Center, STREET Cambridge St
TO BE USED FOR Boston, Mass. CLASS
OWNER
ARCHITECT Mr. Paul Rudolph, 6 Beacon St., Boston
CERTIFICATE APPROVAL-SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS-REFERRED
DATE April 13, 1966
INSPECTOR Frank Graham

1618
CBD

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF INSPECTION

PLAN RECORD

CASE RACK 1 APART. 10 NO. 81516

BUILDING Health, Welfare & Education Bldg. STORIES

CITY OR TOWN Boston STREET Government Center CLASS

TO BE USED FOR

OWNER

ARCHITECT M.A.Dyer Company, 7 Water St. Boston, Mass.

CERTIFICATE APPROVAL-SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS-REFERRED

DATE June 30, 1965

INSPECTOR Francis P. Graham

FORM BU. 1-5M-6-59-925610

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE**

**ADDRESS ON BLC BUILDING INVENTORY FORM:
115 Cambridge Street**

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area Form No.
CBD BOS.1618

EXISTING STATE REGISTER DESIGNATIONS

DESIG CODE	DATE	NAME
none		

MAJOR CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS TO PAGE 1 BASE INFORMATION

Assessors Parcel ID: 0301686000
Assessors Address: 115 Cambridge Street
Names: State Service Center; Senator Joseph A. Langone Jr. Memorial Center (plaque on building); Charles F. Hurley State Service Center; Hurley Employment Security Building (19 Staniford Street); Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center (25 Staniford Street)
Builder: Vappi & Co., Inc. (plaque on building)
Common address: 25 Staniford Street

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This complicated set of buildings occupies nearly an entire city block. The Rudolph-designed structure wraps around three sides of the block, enclosing a large center courtyard; an oval parking structure with two levels of parking is set below the courtyard and borrows light from above. A 4-story wing stands along Cambridge St, at the high point of the very steeply sloping site; as it steps down to the east, the building grows to 6 or more stories in height.

Street facades share common architectural elements, including rounded, corrugated exposed-aggregate concrete piers that begin as free-standing elements and become partially-engaged at the top. In-between, floors progressively step outward as they rise. Horizontal window bands are composed of metal sash that become gradually narrower from the lower to the upper floors, with smooth concrete spandrels and a corrugated concrete parapet at the very top edge. Curved building projections of various heights occur irregularly, and echo the curves in the seating areas built into corrugated concrete site walls, and the form of exterior stairways at the northwest corner (Staniford and Cambridge streets), north elevation (Staniford Street) and northeast elevation (Merrimac and Staniford streets). Plazas on the exterior of the site are paved with bands of smooth and exposed aggregate concrete, and typically feature corrugated concrete walls with smooth, CIP, integral seating areas. Portions of the truncated NE elevation of the building are open to views of the inner courtyard.

The primary entrance to the complex is offset on the Staniford Street elevation, in a 3-story, recessed bay with corrugated concrete piers framing concrete and glazed wall elements. What was likely the original main entrance to the Lindemann Center, at the NE corner, appears to have been closed off, and the triangular plaza that fronts it is now used for parking.

The multi-level inner courtyard is centered around an oval-shaped, raised planting area with low granite retaining walls and granite paving. Around the interior courtyard, the 4-story Congress Street structure continues the themes of the exterior elevations. The interior walls of the north and east wings of the building, however, step back in U-shaped concrete trays as they rise; single and paired concrete piers support wide concrete panels that screen the sun from the walls' horizontal bands of windows. Early or original light fixtures consist of tall metal cylinders suspended from the end of slender, L-shaped metal pipe supports, which are mounted above the piers.

The NE corner of the parcel was originally intended to be the location of a 28-story office tower, which was not built due to lack of funding. That site is now occupied by the Edward Brooke (federal) Courthouse (1999), which was designed by Kallman, McKinnell & Wood; it occupies the same assessors parcel as the Health, Welfare and Education complex.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Architect Paul Rudolph studied at Harvard under Walter Gropius; he opened his own practice in 1952 and was chairman of the department of architecture at Yale from 1958-1965. Rudolph's career flourished in the 1950s and 60s, beginning with a series of

Recorded by: W. Frontiero and L. Smiledge **Organization:** BLC **Date:** June 2009 *Continuation sheet 1*

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**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE**

**ADDRESS ON BLC BUILDING INVENTORY FORM:
115 Cambridge Street**

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area Form No.
CBD BOS.1618

houses and schools in Florida, and later encompassing a series of prominent institutional projects around the country. According to many architectural critics, his best work of that period includes the Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley, the Art and Architecture Building at Yale, the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building (133 Federal St, BOS.1725) and State Services Center in Boston (BOS.1618), and a master plan and buildings for Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (now U. Mass. Dartmouth). Rudolph also designed for Boston the First and Second Church at 64 Marlborough Street in the Back Bay.

The Italian architectural historian Leonardo Benevolo has called Rudolph one of "the most gifted American architects" (Benevolo: 683). His complex and monumental buildings are "generally characterized by irregular silhouette, monolithic and textural surfaces, and dramatic interior spaces" (Placzek: 618). Architect Robert Stern noted that "His search for a convincing, rich architectural style within the modernist canon went as far as anyone could take it." (www.yale.edu/opa)

The Health, Welfare and Education Service Center was built as part of the Government Center redevelopment project. Although Rudolph is officially listed as coordinating architect, the strength and consistency of the design of all the parts suggest that Rudolph was the design force behind the entire project. The building is "considered to be among the most dramatic and architecturally ambitious of the modern office buildings in the United States". (Boston Preservation Alliance: [2]) It has also been described as "a tour de force demonstrating the sculptural possibilities of concrete" (Southworth: 57) and as an "astonishing" building that is at once "massive and shapely, imaginative, technically ingenious, sometimes gratuitously graceful, alternately comfortable and overpowering. . . ." (Lyndon: 84) Still controversial, the building's huge scale, provocative arrangement of forms, and complex spatial sequences are ambitious and experimental, yet have also been criticized as aggressive and disorienting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Benevolo, Leonardo. *History of Modern Architecture; Volume Two: The Modern Movement*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977.
- Boston Preservation Alliance. "Mid-Century Modern Buildings in Downtown Boston. 2008.
- Boston Society of Architects. *Architecture Boston*. Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing, 1976.
- Branch, Mark Alden. "The Building that Won't Go Away." In *Yale Alumni Magazine*, February 1998.
- Campbell, Robert and Peter Vanderwarker. "State Service Center." In *The Boston Globe*, 11/9/1997.
- DOCOMO US. *Docomomo Newsletter*, Spring 2007.
- Goody, Joan E. *New Architecture in Boston*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965.
- Lyndon, Donlyn. *The City Observed; Boston*. New York: Vintage Books, 1982.
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- Placzek, Adolf, Ed. *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*. NY: Free Press, 1982.
- Southworth, Susan and Michael. *AIA Guide to Boston*. Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot, 2008.
- Whitehill, Walter Muir, and Lawrence W. Kennedy. *Boston; A Topographical History*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Obituaries for Paul Rudolph: www.yale.edu/opa (accessed 6/2/2009); *The New York Times*, 8/9/1997.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE**

**ADDRESS ON BLC BUILDING INVENTORY FORM:
115 Cambridge Street**

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area Form No.
CBD BOS.1618

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES and LOCATIONAL INFORMATION



Assessors Map



South and east facades – Cambridge and New Chardon streets)



Courtyard - View to northwest



North (Merrimac Street) elevation

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET
BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE**

**ADDRESS ON BLC BUILDING INVENTORY FORM:
115 Cambridge Street**

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area Form No.
CBD BOS.1618

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES and LOCATIONAL INFORMATION



Northwest elevation (corner Merrimac and Staniford Streets)



West elevation (Staniford Street)



West elevation (Staniford Street)



Ground floor detail –Staniford Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area Form No.
CBD BOS.1618

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
 Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by W. Frontiero

In 2009, although not yet 50 years of age, the Health, Welfare and Education Service Center is significant as a prominent element of the massive urban renewal project at Government Center in the 1960s, and as a brilliant work by the mid-20th century architect, Paul Rudolph. When it reaches 50 years of age, the building will meet Criteria A and C of the National Register on the local, state, and possibly national levels. At this time, more research would be necessary to establish that there presently exists a sufficient body of scholarly research and evaluation of the building and its context as a unique part of one of the largest, most complex, and most successful civic center urban renewal projects in Boston, the state, and the nation, and as an extraordinarily innovative example of modern public architecture, for it to meet the threshold exceptional significance of National Register Criteria Consideration G, for properties less than 50 years of age.

The building is also located within Government Center, a significant mid-twentieth century urban renewal project that in the 1960s transformed the old Scollay Square into a newly configured, mixed-use civic center. Government Center was one of the early projects of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which was established in 1957 and headed by the visionary planner Edward J. Logue from 1960 to 1968. I.M. Pei & Associates of New York City designed the master plan (1961), which encompassed new city, state, and federal office buildings, privately-financed office and retail space, and the eight-acre city Hall Plaza, as well as the preservation of select historic properties. An array of architects with regional, national, and international reputations was associated with its execution. As part of the redevelopment of the area, approximately 60 acres of land were cleared of buildings, thousands of residents and hundreds of businesses were displaced, 22 streets were consolidated into six, and a new network of pedestrian open spaces, with integral streetscape elements and public art, was created.

In 2009, Government Center is not yet 50 years of age; its eligibility for listing on the National Register as a district should be reconsidered as significant components of its design achieve 50-year status. At this time, more research would be necessary to determine whether there presently exists a sufficient body of scholarly research and evaluation of Government Center and its role in the context of mid-20th century urban renewal in Boston, the state, and nationally, for it to meet the threshold of exceptional significance of National Register Criteria Consideration G, for properties less than 50 years of age.

NR

CLGC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Boston
BOS.1618

Date Received:

Date Reviewed:

Type: Individual District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name: Health, Welfare & Education Service Center
for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Inventory Form: attached

Address: 115 Cambridge Street, Boston

Action: Honor ITC Grant CLGC initiated Other:

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DISTRICTS

- Eligible
- Eligible, also in district
- Eligible only in district
- Ineligible
- More information needed

- Eligible
- Ineligible
- More information needed

CRITERIA: A B C D

LEVEL: Local State National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by James Labeck, Asst. Dir. Survey & Planning, BLC.
(Refer to criteria cited above in statement of significance. If more information is needed, use space to describe what is needed to finish eligibility opinion.)

The Health, Welfare & Education Service Center for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at 115 Cambridge Street possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and both embodies distinctive characteristics of a type and represents a distinguished work of architecture. The Health, Welfare & Education Center meets criteria C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local, state, and national levels, and exception G as a property that has achieved significance within the past 50 years.

The Service Center was built 1964-70, and was designed by Paul Marvin Rudolph with Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, and Desmond & Lord. It is a massive, irregularly-shaped modern office complex in the Expressionistic style, called "sculptural exo-structure" with "hammered concrete skin" emphasizing contrast between rough and smooth surfaces. The Service Center is one of the most dramatic and architecturally ambitious of the Government Center Urban Renewal project.

Paul Rudolph conceived of the center as a unified grouping of three buildings around a pedestrian plaza. Only two of the original three buildings designed were constructed: the Hurley Employment Security building (Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott); Lindemann Mental Health Building (Desmond & Lord, architects, ~~See reverse if necessary.~~)

MHC STAFF OPINION

Date Received:

Date Reviewed:

1/16/91

Opinion: Concur Disagree More information needed

See Reverse for Comments

Paul Rudolph, architectural design). Paul Rudolph, known for his "individual, vigorous expressionism," was born in Kentucky in 1918, studied at Alabama Polytechnic Institute and Harvard GSD, and in 1958 was appointed Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Yale.

Nomination would have to justify exception G, pertaining to properties achieving significance in the last 50 years.

Nomination should also address how this project related to the larger planning and development of Boston's Government Center.



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FEB 11 1991

CITY OF BOSTON
ENVIRONMENT DEPT.

February 6, 1991

James Labeck
Assistant Director of Survey and Planning
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805
Boston, MA 02201

RE: CLG NR Eligibility Opinions

Dear Jim:

The staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission has recently completed reviewing the eight attached CLG National Register eligibility opinions submitted as part of the FY 89 Survey and Planning Grant Project for the reevaluation of Boston's Central Business District. Our comments are as follows:

1. Boston City Hall. MHC staff concurs that Boston City Hall meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the national level, and exception G as a property that has achieved significance within the past 50 years. The historic context would need to be broadened to justify the property's significance on the local and state levels. Refer to "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (enclosed) for information on evaluating local, state and national historic contexts. MHC staff also feels that the property meets Criterion A for its strong associations with the development of Boston's Government Center and the urban renewal philosophy prevalent at the time.

2. Health, Welfare, and Education Service Center. MHC staff concurs that the Health, Welfare, and Education Service Center meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the national level, and exception G as a property that has achieved significance within the last 50 years. Again, the property's historic context would need to be broadened to justify its significance on the local and state levels. The building may also meet Criterion A for its associations with the larger planning and development of Boston's Government Center.

3. City Hall Annex. MHC staff concurs that the City Hall Annex meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level. The property also appears to meet Criterion A as an important public building associated with the expansion of Boston's municipal government.

4. Hutchinson Building. MHC staff concurs that the Hutchinson Building meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level. Staff also feels that the Hutchinson Building may also meet Criterion A. Additional research on the development and growth of this section of Boston would be required to confirm this. 1963

5. Easton Building. MHC staff concurs that the Easton Building meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local and state levels. In addition, MHC staff feel the building meets Criterion A for its associations with the Ames family of Easton, Massachusetts. Any subsequent nomination of this property would require additional information of the building's connection with the Ames family. 2012

6. Jewelers Building. MHC staff concurs that the Jewelers Building meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level. The staff also feels that the property meets Criterion A for its role as Boston's jewelry center and for its larger associations with the city's commercial center. Any subsequent nomination should place the Jewelers Building within a context of development during the period, specifically Boston's early skyscraper development. There also appears to be the potential for a district which would include other buildings developed after the fire of 1872. 2131

7. Chinese Merchants Association Building. There does not appear to be sufficient information at this time to justify exception G for properties achieving significance within the last 50 years. Any eventual nomination of this property would need to address the overall development of Boston's Chinese community and Chinatown, and the role that the Chinese Merchants Association played in that development. 1702

8. State Street Bank and Trust Building. MHC staff will require additional information to comment on this eligibility opinion. There is no reference made to the addition (75-101 Federal Street) made to this building in 1988. This addition obscures one facade of the subject property completely, and appears to have involved some alteration of the lobby, which is noted as one of the building's most important architectural features. Additional information on the nature of the recent expansion, and its impact on the integrity of the building's historic fabric and integrity of its setting should be submitted to MHC. STATE

The property may also meet Criterion A for its associations with Boston's financial sector, and the significant downtown building boom occurring at the time of the building's construction. Finally, no context has been presented for the building's significance on the state level. 1743

If you have any questions about the above comments, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Mark Verkennis

Mark Verkennis
Director of Local Government Programs
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

MV/kab